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A mother leopard's lessons

A first-hand narrative of a leopard raising her three cubs in the BTR

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'Blacky' and his siblings at the Bhadra Tiger Reserve's Lakkavalli range. PHOTO BY GOPAL KRISHNA

A mother leopard's lessons

Gopal Krishna presents a first-hand narrative of a leopard raising her three cubs in the Bhadra Tiger Reserve

The safari zone of Bhadra Tiger Reserve's Lakkavalli range was unusually silent on a May morning in 2025. No langur sounded an alarm. No spotted deer barked a warning. As our jeep returned from what seemed like another dry safari, movement flickered at the edge of a drying waterbody. A female leopard (*Panthera pardus*) suddenly emerged from the bushes and onto the mud road.

Her behaviour was uncharacteristic. Leopards are masters of camouflage, vanishing into foliage within seconds of being sighted. This one, however, stood her ground, repeatedly glancing back into the undergrowth. Within minutes, three tiny cubs tumbled out of the cover.

We were about 200 metres away. Among the cubs was a melanistic individual, popularly known as a black panther. It is a rare colour variant caused by a recessive gene that results in an overproduction of the dark pigment. The mother gently picked up each cub by the scruff and moved them, one by one, to a safer hide. For nearly 25 minutes, we watched in silence. No one in the jeep with six people complained of delay.

The cubs, barely three to four months old, hissed softly, bared their tiny teeth, before attempting the oldest trick in the wild — hiding in plain sight. Their fragile bravado made the encounter unforgettable.

For the next three weeks, almost every safari vehicle entering Lakkavalli spent time near the same waterbody. More often than not, the leopard family was there. As days passed, the triplets — two males and one female — grew increasingly confident, particularly the black cub, nicknamed 'Blacky' by guides and drivers. The cubs were frequently seen playing, mock-fighting and sharpening their early hunting instincts.

Bhadra in summer is a land of contrasts — open, sunlit patches merging abruptly into dense bamboo thickets. The teak (*Tectona grandis*), kindal (*Terminalia paniculata*), and mixed plantations form an uneasy boundary between the wild forest and managed land. Visibility changes with every step. It is in these transitional spaces — where exposure and concealment coexist — that the leopard mother chose to raise her cubs.

Before the monsoon set in, the family gravitated towards the backwaters of the Bhadra Reservoir as water sources within the forest became scarce. The receding water of the reservoir exposed the rocky shelves, mudflats and narrow forest corridors — landscapes neither fully aquatic nor terrestrial. These shifting margins became the stage for a remarkable natural drama.

Over more than a year of regular morning and evening safaris, I, being a naturalist at the reserve, watched the mother raise her cubs in this changing landscape.

The natural drama

The cubs spent their early weeks playing among fallen branches, dry leaves and exposed stones left behind by the retreating waters. They chased one another across uneven ground, slipping and recovering, learning balance and coordination. Gradually, play sharpened into skill. The black cub instinctively chose darker spaces — under dense canopy or between bamboo clumps — where shade offered both concealment and confidence.

Survival lessons in the wild were being taught silently. I often observed the mother move slowly through teak and bamboo stands, and freeze without warning. Instantly, the cubs mirrored her, flattening themselves against rocks or tree roots. This was their first lesson in invisibility.

The forest, too, was their tutor. When langurs sounded alarm calls or spotted deer barked from plantation edges, the cubs dropped low, pressing themselves into the earth. Long before encountering danger directly, they learned to interpret the forest's warning system — a language shared across species.

Bhadra is a challenging terrain for a leopard family as the landscape is dominated by tigers. Tigers, being topmost predators, pose a constant threat to the family. In addition to tigers, packs of wild dogs and dominant male leopards also present serious dangers to the family.

However, the mother responded with constant vigilance. She shifted her cubs frequently, selecting shelters with care — dense bamboo, rocky crevices, steep slopes and thick undergrowth inaccessible to larger predators.

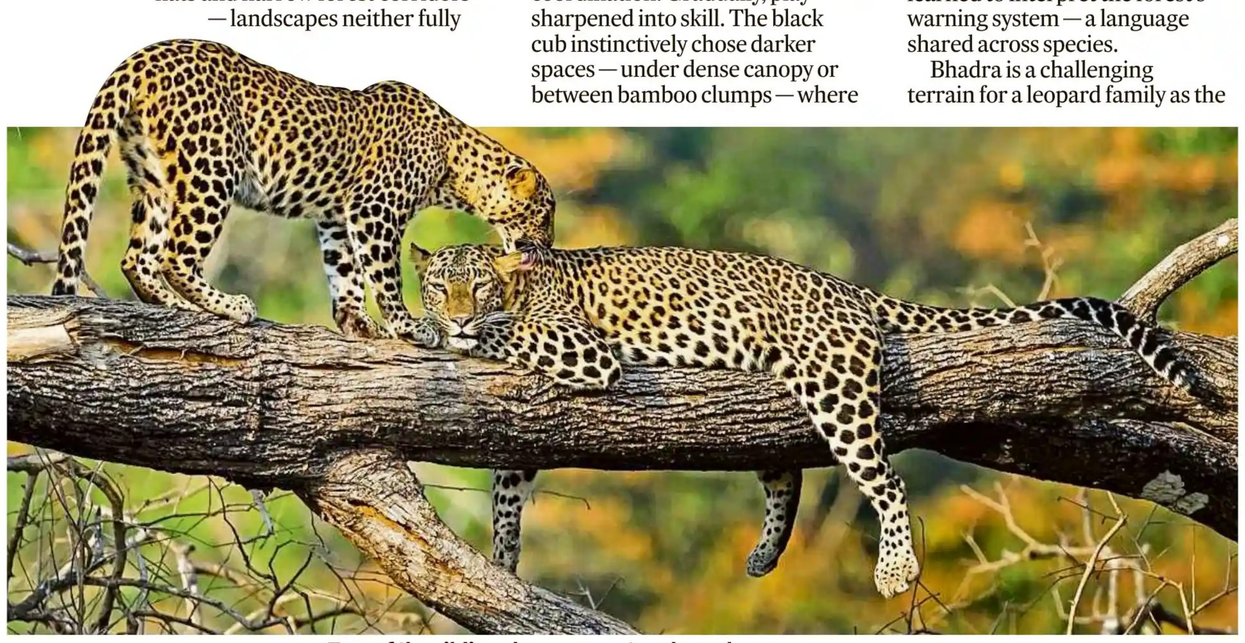
Training in hunting

Hunting lessons began modestly. Along forest edges and near plantation boundaries, the cubs stalked insects, birds and squirrels. Most attempts failed, but each sharpened their patience, focus and balance. After successful hunts, the mother dragged the kill into dense cover or hoisted it onto a tree branch, a necessary strategy in Bhadra, where wild dogs or tigers can make away with the kill within minutes.

As the monsoon retrieved, the cubs grew muscular and more assured. In seven to eight months, the cubs neared maturity and the mother's behaviour shifted. She grew less responsive to their calls, often walking ahead without looking back. Gradually, she withdrew from her core territory. Leopards are solitary by nature and separation is not abandonment but preparation.

Now nearly 14 months old, the cubs stand on the threshold of independence. That a female leopard has successfully raised all her cubs to this stage in the hostile terrain of a tiger reserve speaks to remarkable resilience, where concealment, caution and instinct are the very tools of survival.

(The author is a naturalist)



Two of the siblings longue on a tree branch. PHOTO BY KIRAN PATIL

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to: spectrum@deccanherald.co.in

Faded in memory but survived in craft

Hemalatha Jain writes about Hubli sarees and the reflection of its motifs in other weaves of the Deccan region

I was working on yarn combinations for a saree *pallu* at a family handloom workspace in Gajendragad during a field visit. When calibrating colour against *kora* warp — an unbleached, undyed cotton yarn in its natural off-white state — to achieve the luminous *dhoop-chhaav* effect (a colour interplay), characteristic of older Deccan textiles, 85-year-old weaver Hussain Saab's eyes stuck on a small piece of fabric we had been examining.

Hussain Saab said he had seen the weaving of such a saree by his father. Identifying it by its structural and design features — the *kora* warp, contrast weft interplay and the distinctive *gadi dadi* border, he said "This is a Hubli saree."

In the mid-1950s, Hussain Saab recalled, the saree was extensively woven in Gajendragad, Bagalkot and Gadag regions. Known simply as the Hubli saree (now Hubballi), it was worn mostly by women in villages. It was completely handwoven on pitlooms and was practical, breathable, and vibrant. The warp for the body was always in *kora*, offset by contrast weft. The borders were unmistakably bright.

Its defining feature was the *gadi dadi* border — a rail-track pattern of floral motifs. Today, variations of this border survive in Ilkal and Narayanpet sarees, but the name "Hubli saree" has faded from memory.

Scientific testing of the fabric sample revealed that the piece was approximately 103 years old. What lay before us was not merely cloth, but evidence of continuity and of silent endurance.

The 'gadi dadi' borders seen in Hubli, Narayanpet and Nippani sarees.

Similar motif in Karvat Kathi or Iruki Paddike weaves.

Mapping the sample

As I began tracing the *gadi dadi* motif, a larger Deccan map began to unfold. In Madhya Pradesh, a similar elongated floral form appears in *rui phool* borders seen in Malwa handloom sarees, including Maheshwari variants. The weaving clusters around Nippani on the Maharashtra–Karnataka border also produce sarees featuring comparable borders. In the Narayanpet weaves of present-day Telangana, the motif merges into temple-style borders without a distinct local name, though the resemblance remains striking. Even the saw-tooth-edged Karvat Kathi border of Nagpur finds echoes in North Karnataka's Iruki paddike — a narrow, closely packed border resembling interlocked steps.

Somewhere along the march of mechanisation and shifting markets, the Hubli saree receded. But the motifs have travelled more freely than we know. The names change. The regions shift but the design continues. The Deccan has always been less a boundary and more a bridge in this sense.

At this moment of disappearance and survival, I am reminded of a *vachana* of Jedara Dasimayya, the mystic weaver-saint who understood the loom as both craft and cosmos:

Life the starched yarn, set the strings right
Have equal footing, but don't touch the loom
The shuttle which I am holding has swallowed the bundle of yarn
Is it you who wove the sari or I?

The question lingers.

When I sit beside Hussain Saab, adjusting yarn tension and colour sequences, I find myself asking the same thing: who truly weaves the Hubli saree? Is it the octogenarian custodian of memory? His father, who wove a century ago? The unnamed women who wore it across Gadag's fields? Or the migrating motif that refuses to disappear?

Revival, I realise, is not about recreating a lost design. It is about recognising continuity. What we call innovation may simply be inheritance without acknowledgement.

The Hubli saree may not yet have a Geographical Indication tag or curated exhibition space. But it carries something rarer — an unbroken thread of memory.

And the loom, as Hussain Saab reminds me, does not forget. It waits for someone to listen.

The 'rui phool' borders seen in Malwa handloom sarees, including Maheshwari variants. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

Dedicated to science: A doctor's push for body donation

Divyashri Mudakavi writes about a doctor facilitating body donations and creating awareness about it in Karnataka

When Basavanneppa Ramannavar, a doctor and freedom fighter, died in 2008, he left behind an unusual wish in his will: that his son, Dr Mahantesh Ramannavar, an anatomy (Rachana Sharir) professor at an Ayurveda Medical college in Belagavi, should dissect his body for medical education purpose. Guided by medical ethics and citing the example of William Harvey, who is known to have conducted anatomical dissection on his sister, Mahantesh proceeded with the dissection on the second death anniversary of his father. He did so with the support of his mother, Sushiladevi, also a doctor — becoming the first doctor in India to carry out such an act.

However, Dr Mahantesh looked beyond the attention the act generated. He was aware of the persistent shortage of cadavers in medical colleges. He began advocating voluntary body donation through the Dr Ramannavar Charitable Trust, Bailhongal and the Dr Ramannavar Foundation.

Nearly 16 years on, his work has led to more than 5,000 body donation pledges and the facilitation of over 100 cadaver donations to medical institutions in Karnataka and neighbouring states. In addition, the initiative has enabled around 200 eye donations and 60 to 70 skin donations. "There are several religious myths associated with body donation, and these often deter people from pledging their bodies. Addressing these misconceptions was my first challenge. It took sustained outreach and dialogue, but we were eventually able to change at least a few minds," says Dr Mahantesh.

A major milestone came when Gurusiddeshwara Swamiji of Karanji Mutt, Belagavi, and Basavaraja Pattadarya Swamiji of Gurusiddeshwara Brihan Mutt, Guledgudda, pledged their bodies. "Their decision carried significance because it challenged the belief that traditional last rites must always be performed in a particular manner," Dr Mahantesh adds. The seers' decision encouraged many others. On the day they formalised their pledge, nearly 300 people signed up as well. This momentum continued, with several individuals, including Murugendra Swamiji of Munavalli Mutt, pledging their bodies.

"We, as religious leaders, guide people in matters of social good. It is only appropriate that we begin with ourselves," says 76-year-old Gurusiddeshwara Swamiji, who pledged his body at the age of 68.

A village of donors

In 2024, over 180 residents of Shegunashi in Belagavi district, pledged their bodies for donation, making it one of the few villages in India with such a large number of pledges. "Around 14 bodies from the village have been donated to various medical colleges so far," Dr Shivakumar Kalyanmath, a yoga practitioner and doctor, who inspired them.

For I R Mathpathi, a belief in Sharana literature was the main motivation behind pledging to donate his body. "Around 15 years ago, I, along with six others from our family, pledged our bodies. My wife's body has been donated. In Sharana culture, death is a celebration of a fulfilled life, and this will continue if the body is donated," he says.

According to Dr Mahantesh, one of the biggest challenges in body donation is ensuring the body is medically preserved within six hours of death. This apart, obtaining a certificate from a doctor specifying the cause of death in case the death occurs at home is crucial. "Even after someone has pledged, a body can be accepted only if the death is natural. Securing a certificate from a doctor on time is therefore necessary," he explains.

He also emphasised that organ and body donation cannot occur simultaneously — once organs (except eye and skin) are harvested, the body can no longer be used for anatomical study. For this reason, Ramannavar advocates observing a dedicated day to raise awareness about body donation and its significance, at the national level.

Dr Mahantesh also regularly reaches out to people through various platforms to promote the cause. He notes that the decision to donate is purely personal and cannot be forced, but believes every donation deserves respect. Whenever a cadaver reaches a college, it is honoured through prayers and an oath-taking ceremony by students, helping them appreciate the importance of a cadaver in medical education.

Through his efforts, Dr Mahantesh has been demonstrating that even in death, one can leave a legacy that continues to contribute to medical education and save lives. Dr Ramannavar Charitable Trust, Bailhongal can be contacted on 92424 96497.

Dr Ramannavar Charitable Trust, Bailhongal and students conduct a body receiving ceremony at an Ayurveda college in Belagavi; Dr Mahantesh Ramannavar creates awareness on body and organ donation in Kittur.

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The Power of Good

Dube, Chakravarthy star in India's win over Netherlands

India end league stage with 17-run victory

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Mallya unable to return to India due to UK legal curbs, court told P.10

World

US accuses China of conducting covert nuclear test P.12

Nation

Dhruv choppers return to the skies P.7

Nation

Proof of penetration must to prove rape: HC P.10

Quickly

Election for 37 RS seats on March 16

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday announced biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha for 37 seats across 10 states, with polling scheduled for March 16.

The ECI said the 37 seats that are going to polls are falling vacant on April 2 and 9 and notifications for the polls will be issued on February 26.

Maharashtra will see the highest number of seats going to the polls at 7, followed by Tamil Nadu (6), Bihar and West Bengal (5 each), Odisha (4), Assam (3), Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Haryana (2 each) and Himachal Pradesh with one seat.

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India eases China import restrictions

India has begun easing its restrictions on buying Chinese equipment after a deadly 2020 border clash, allowing state-run power and coal companies to start limited imports as shortages and project delays mount, two government said.

This is the first significant easing of five-year-old curbs that have largely shut Chinese firms out of India's $700 billion-$750 billion government contract market.

Details on Page 7

Maha govt cancels 5% Muslim quota

The Maharashtra government has withdrawn the 5% reservation for Muslims in jobs and education, drawing sharp criticism from the Opposition, which accused the Mahayuti administration of being "anti-minority."

A Government Resolution (GR) to this effect was issued on Tuesday as the previous ordinance about the 5% reservation has lapsed.

Details on Page 7

- New fibre optic routes will establish Vizag as a major international subsea gateway
- This will add vital diversity from existing landings in Mumbai and Chennai
- The project will increase resilience of India's digital backbone and improve economic security
- Pichai also announces a $30 million grant to support AI research in India
- Google plans to run AI for Science Impact Challenge to support work in quantum computing, climate modelling

Google to set up India-US undersea cable for AI

America-India Connect project to boost connectivity

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Tech giant Google on Wednesday said it will develop strategic fibre-optic routes between the United States, India and multiple locations across the Southern Hemisphere to bolster networks for artificial intelligence (AI).

The company plans to strengthen the AI infrastructure through a new initiative called the "America-India Connect".

"Last year, we announced a $15 billion AI hub in Vizag. This hub will house Gigawatt scale computers and a new international subsea cable gateway. When finished, it will bring jobs and the benefits of cutting edge AI to people and businesses across India," Google CEO Sundar Pichai said at an event here.

Pichai is in New Delhi to participate in India AI Impact Summit, which will be formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday. Expo and related events kicked off on February 16.

As part of the America-India Connect initiative, Google plans to establish a new international subsea gateway in Visakhapatnam (Vizag); three new subsea paths connecting India to Singapore, South Africa, and Australia; and four strategic fibre-optic routes that bolster network resilience and capacity between the United States, India and multiple locations across south of the equator.

▸ Google, Page 5

PM Narendra Modi with CEO of Google Sundar Pichai in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Guinness for India for AI Responsibility

India has successfully achieved the Guinness World Records title for the most pledges received for an AI responsibility campaign in 24 hours, Union Minister for Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Wednesday.

Details on Page 13

Microsoft to invest $50 billion

Microsoft said it will invest $50 billion by the end of the decade to expand AI access in countries in the Global South, including India. According to Microsoft's Vice Chair Brad Smith, the investment includes $17.5 billion for India.

Details on Page 13

Galgotias University's stall at the AI Summit. PTI

Galgotias varsity removed over Chinese robodog

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Noida-based Galgotias University was on Wednesday asked to leave the expo associated with the 'India AI Impact Summit' after it came under fire for displaying a Chinese-made robodog as their own and the government faced backlash from the Opposition.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi took to 'X' to say, "Instead of leveraging India's talent and data, the AI summit is a disorganised PR spectacle - Indian data up for sale, Chinese products showcased," even as government sources said the university was asked to vacate "immediately".

Details on Page 7

B'luru garbage disposal row turns into political slugfest

Waste collection to be affected; DKS warns of ESMA

BENGALURU, DHNS

Garbage collection in Bengaluru is likely to be disrupted on Thursday due to the ongoing blockade of waste-laden compactors at Bellahalli landfill even as the issue snowballed into a political slugfest. While Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday blamed BJP MLAs for the obstruction, Opposition leader R Ashoka charged that the government has become "garbage mafia".

Villagers in Mahadevapura on Wednesday continued to block hundreds of vehicles from dumping the waste at Bellahalli, which takes nearly half of the city's garbage.

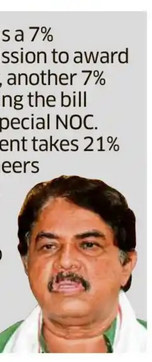
The trigger for the blockade, which started on Tuesday, was the death of a two-year-old boy in a road accident on Sunday, with villagers — who obstructed traffic on roads including the stretch leading to the landfill – holding the state government responsible for the poor condition of roads in their area.

While none of the vehicles that went to the landfill could return after emptying their loads, the situation was no different at the seven other processing plants spread across the city.

▸ Garbage, Page 6
Related report on Page 2

"If Arvind Limbavali and Dheeraj Muniraju keep objecting to the disposal of waste in their constituencies for want of funds, where do we dispose of the garbage? We will have to send it to the homes of R Ashoka, Vijayendra or the BJP party office.

DK Shivakumar
Deputy Chief Minister



"There is a 7% commission to award tender, another 7% each for settling the bill and to issue special NOC. The government takes 21% and the engineers swallow 71%. There is nothing left for picking up the garbage

R Ashoka
LoP

Nagarahole, Bandipur safaris set to resume

BENGALURU, DHNS: Safari operations in Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserves, which were suspended on November 7, 2025, is all set to resume.

Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre said the operations will resume in a phased manner, based on the preliminary report of a technical committee. Only 50% of the vehicles that were operating prior to the suspension will be allowed in the first phase, he said.

Details on Page 5

Cocaine worth Rs 23.88 cr seized at Bengaluru Airport

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday seized 4.7 kg of cocaine worth Rs 23.88 crore from a Brazilian national at the Bengaluru Airport.

The NCB said the suspect has been secured for detailed questioning to ascertain the source, destination, and wider conspiracy involved in the trafficking attempt.

The suspect had chemically infused the cocaine in fabrics to try and evade the authorities, officials said.

The operation was executed by the NCB's Bengaluru Zonal Unit in the early hours of February 17.

"The accused travelled from São Paulo in Brazil to Doha, Qatar, and subsequently boarded a flight to Bengaluru," an NCB statement said.

"During examination of his checked-in baggage at the airport, officers recovered four ladies' handbags that had been specially modified with concealed bottom compartments and sides. These cavities were found to contain multiple pieces of fabric chemically infused with cocaine," the statement added.

State notifies Act to shrink lake buffer zones based on area

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government on Wednesday notified the controversial 'The Karnataka Tank Conservation And Development Authority (Amendment) Act, 2025' which sets the buffer zone of water bodies based on their size.

Though the amendment was passed by the legislature in August, 2025, the Governor had sent back the Bill seeking clarity on its 'adverse effect'. Following this, Minor Irrigation Minister N S Boseraju had said the Bill would not harm any lakes and a revised version would be submitted. He had argued that the standard 30 metres buffer zone for all lakes had left large areas around smaller lakes useless.

It is learnt that the Governor gave consent to the Bill on Monday.

Earlier, all the lakes in the city had a standard buffer zone of 30 metres. Now, with the act notified, the buffer zone of only lakes bigger than 100 acres will remain 30 metres.

While the lakes up to 0.05 acres will have no buffer zone, those between 0.05 to 0.1 acres will have a buffer zone of one metre.

Lakes measuring between 0.1-1 acre will have only three metres of buffer zone. The buffer zone will be six metres for lakes sized 1-10 acres, 12 metres for lakes sized 10-25 acres, and 24 metres for lakes sized 25-100 acres.

▸ Buffer zones, Page 5

Road-rage cases in Bengaluru triple in a year

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Road-rage cases in Bengaluru have nearly tripled in just a year, with the city reporting a total of 95 cases in 2025. In comparison, 34 cases were reported in 2024, and 36 in 2023, as per data shared by the Bengaluru police.

This year, as many as 11 cases of road rage have been registered till January 27.

A senior police official attributed the rising registration of cases to the Social Media Monitoring Cell (SMMC), which has been routinely identifying instances of road rage from across social networking platforms.

"Pertaining to road-rage cases, the team has been trained on what to look for and how to look for it. They inspect the posts and dashcam videos put up on social media and then pass it on to the respective authorities, who take necessary action. Be it a case between two individuals or groups, we make sure to hear out all parties involved," he said.

Of the 95 cases reported in 2025, Whitefield division saw the most cases at 31, followed by Bengaluru West at 13. Electronics City ended up at the bottom of the table with zero reported cases.

▸ Road-rage, Page 5

Rising stress

Counselling psychologist Afifa Kauser says the rise in road rages can be linked to an increase in individual stress. "...one part of it is how stressful it can be to drive in that state of mind, in an extremely populated and polluted environment which lacks civic sense. When one is overstimulated, our ability to handle stress has already reached some level of saturation."

DREAM RUN

J&K make history, enter maiden Ranji final; set to meet K'taka

"On my behalf, and on behalf of the people of J&K , I extend heartfelt congratulations to all of them. I hope the day is not far when players from J&K play an important role in the national team... Winning the Ranji Trophy is not something an individual can accomplish alone; it is the success of the entire team and the support staff

OMAR ABDULLAH
J&K CM

BENGALURU, DHNS

After breakthrough runs by Saurashtra, Rajasthan and Vidarbha, another compelling chapter has now been written by Jammu and Kashmir, who stormed into their maiden Ranji Trophy final, where Karnataka is set to meet them.

Coming 67 years after they first appeared in the tournament, this historic moment unfolded on Wednesday in Kalyani, roughly 50 km from Kolkata, where Jammu and Kashmir produced a performance defined by resilience and belief.

After conceding a first-innings lead to Bengal, the North Zone outfit found itself under pressure. What followed was a remarkable comeback. Their bowlers turned the match on its head with disciplined spells, dismantling Bengal's batting lineup and setting up a six-wicket victory that stunned the home side.

This triumph has earned Jammu and Kashmir a place on the grandest domestic stage, where they are set to face Karnataka. Karnataka, meanwhile, hold a commanding position against Uttarakhand in the other semifinal, having established a mammoth 802-run lead going into Thursday's final day.

The final is scheduled to be played from February 24 to 28, with Karnataka designated as hosts.

However, with the M Chinnaswamy Stadium currently undergoing structural rework, Hubballi's Rajnagar Stadium is strongly tipped to host the final, subject to approval by the BCCI.

Being the final, conducive facilities for live broadcast will also have to be kept in mind.

Jammu and Kashmir contingent celebrates after winning the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Bengal in Kalyani on Wednesday. PTI

Late B.M.Sreenivasaiah
Founder

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BMS Institute of Technology & Management (BMSIT&M)
Yelahanka. www.bmsit.ac.in

BMS School of Architecture (BMSSA)
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Detailed fee structure and eligibility criteria are available on the websites of the respective institutions.

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Application forms shall be submitted in person to Director (Admissions).

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Director (Admissions), BMS Educational Trust

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Chandapura Lake remained polluted for most of 2025

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The water quality of Chandapura Lake remained at 'Class E' — the lowest category — for most of last year, prompting the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) to recommend issuing a notice to the Town Municipal Council (TMC) for violations.

An inspection report by the Sarjapur environmental officer stated that while sewage-mixed water from upstream had been diverted, seepage from the drain continues to enter the lake, causing pollution and foul odour.

Chandapura Lake has been divided into four interconnected ponds to enable staged treatment of nutrient-rich water. Flowing water is first impounded in the initial tank to allow solids to settle, with overflow channelled sequentially into the remaining tanks for further treatment.

During the inspection, the officer observed excessive weed growth on all tank bunds. The report also noted that sewage-mixed water diverted from the lake was "overflowing near the weir", contributing to contamination.

Water quality data showed that between December 2024 and November 2025, the lake's water remained in the 'Class E' category for 10 months, indicating it was unfit even for propagation of wildlife and fish and suitable only for industrial cooling and irrigation.

For the remaining two months, the quality marginally improved to 'Class D'.

Contaminated water diverted from Chandapura Lake is flowing downstream towards Muthanallur Lake.

Though the report did not provide full details, sources indicated that the Minor Irrigation Department has further diverted the water downstream.

Dumping of waste

The officer also flagged concerns over dumping of municipal solid waste (MSW) near the lake.

"TMC Chandapura has temporarily dumped a small quantity of MSW adjacent to the lake, and some compactors filled with MSW have been parked at the same location," the report said.

TMC Chief Officer Manjunath was unavailable for comment on whether the civic body had complied with the regulations.

STP construction pending

A KSPCB source said the lake would continue to remain polluted until a sewage treatment plant (STP) is constructed.

"Progress has been made after the National Green Tribunal imposed a penalty. However, infrastructure projects such as an STP take time. The work is being closely monitored by the Urban Development Department," the source said, adding that industries are currently routing their wastewater to a common effluent treatment plant.

Airport pickup rules ease, yet high fares pinch travellers

Prices have soared over past two months, say passengers

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Trips from the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) have become costlier, commuters say, with airport authorised aggregator platforms charging higher fares than other ride-hailing services.

While kerbside access has improved and early issues with the new pickup rules have eased, returning to the city remains a hurdle, passengers told *DH*. They said authorised aggregators such as Ola, Uber, Quick Ride, WTI Cabs and Mega Cabs were charging higher fares than other platforms.

"As a family of four, we were looking to book an SUV cab to our home in JP Nagar," Naveen Kumar, 56, a passenger, said.

"Since the closest options were Uber Black and Ola, we automatically chose Ola, as we did not want any luxury service. To our surprise, the price for an SUV cab on Ola was Rs 2,227, and the Uber Black was around Rs 2,000. In comparison, Namma Yatri was offering a cab at Rs 1,750, which is the usual cost," he added.

Passengers also said prices have soared over the past two months.

A reality check by *DH* found airport authorised aggregators such as Ola, Uber and Quick Ride charged fares at least 20 per cent higher than platforms such as Namma Yatri and Rapido, especially during the evening peak hour. Neither Ola nor Uber offer non-AC cabs at the airport.

On Tuesday evening, a regular cab from the airport to Indiranagar was priced at Rs 914 on Uber, Rs 836 on Ola, Rs 759 on Rapido, and Rs 774 on Namma Yatri.

A sedan to MG Road was priced at Rs 940 on Uber, Rs 887 on Ola, Rs 785 on Namma Yatri, and Rs 809 on Rapido. Quick Ride, which offers premium electric vehicles, charged Rs 1,418 to MG Road and Rs 1,301 to Indiranagar.

Similarly, on Monday evening, Ola displayed a fare of Rs 850 for a regular cab to RT Nagar, while Uber displayed Rs 848, and Rapido Rs 652. Quick Ride, WTI Cabs and Mega Cabs offered fares between Rs 1,121 and Rs 2,901 for a sedan.

An Uber spokesperson said the pricing is based on demand and supply.

"There has been no change in Uber's pricing structure for airport pickups. Pricing is a function of demand and supply, and as one of the many players operating at the airport, we strive to offer competitive prices," they said.

Ola did not respond to *DH's* queries.

Commuters say airport authorised aggregator platforms are charging higher fares than other ride-hailing services. DH FILE

A reality check by *DH* found airport authorised aggregators such as Ola, Uber and Quick Ride charged fares at least 20 per cent higher than platforms such as Namma Yatri and Rapido, especially during the evening peak hour. Neither Ola nor Uber offer non-AC cabs at the airport.

Properties with tax dues to be auctioned on Sat

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC) will auction properties with long-pending tax dues on Saturday after owners failed to pay despite notices.

The BWCC said notices were served to property owners asking them to clear the dues. They were later sent reminders through messages, followed by proclamation notices.

"However, many property owners have failed to pay the taxes even after multiple notices and reminders. Hence, the properties will be auctioned," a corporation statement said.

If the outstanding property tax is paid in full before the auction, the property will be withdrawn from the list, the corporation said.

The notification lists 88 properties in Rajarajeshwari Nagar division and 71 in Malleswaram zone. Tax dues stand at Rs 2.27 crore in Rajarajeshwari Nagar and Rs 1.14 crore in Malleswaram.

BSWML flags garbage crisis to Mahadevapura MLA

Move comes after villagers in Bellahalli block garbage-laden compactors

BENGALURU, DHNS

After villagers in Bellahalli blocked garbage-laden compactors from entering the landfill, the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) has sought the cooperation of Manjula Aravind Limbavali, MLA of Mahadevapura.

The standoff could disrupt the city's waste collection, as the Bellahalli landfill handles nearly half of Bengaluru's 5,500 tonnes of daily waste.

"We are speaking to the MLA and seeking cooperation," said M Maheshwar Rao, chairperson of BSWML and Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Officials expressed confidence that the issue would be resolved by Thursday evening, with one option reportedly being to transport waste during late-night hours.

Sources said other MLAs have also urged the BSWML not to divert Bellahalli-bound waste to processing plants in Doddabidarakallu, Chikknagamangala, Kannahalli and Doddaballapura.

The primary contention raised by local representatives is the non-release of funds under a village development scheme. They argue that the continuous movement of garbage trucks has damaged local roads.

MLA Manjula did not respond to calls.

Aravind Limbavali, former legislator and Manjula's husband, said the protest would continue until the government releases funds to repair roads damaged by garbage vehicles.

"Funds were sanctioned last year, but have not been released by officials. Had the funds been released on time, work could have begun before the monsoon," he said, adding that leachate treatment work has also not commenced. He urged the government to expedite the integrated solid waste management plant to prevent further dumping in Mahadevapura.

Dheeraj Muniraju, MLA of Doddaballapura, said his constituency receives around 70 garbage compactors daily from Bengaluru, but the promised Rs 10-crore grant has not been released. He also alleged that Rs 50 crore was sanctioned to a Congress MLA, even though Anekal receives only four compactors of waste.

Concerns genuine: KBG

Revenue Minister and Byatarayanapura MLA Krishna Byre Gowda acknowledged that villages near the landfill have been affected by foul odour and possible water contamination. "Their concerns are genuine," he said, adding that delays in grant disbursal are among the issues.

The Bellahalli landfill handles nearly half of Bengaluru's 5,500 tonnes of daily waste. DH FILE PHOTO

Hotel fined Rs 1 lakh for failing to segregate waste

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) on Wednesday imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on a hotel for violating solid waste management norms.

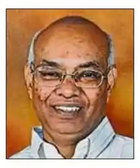
According to a statement issued by the BSWML, the hotel had failed to segregate wet and dry waste at source. It was also found lacking in maintaining hygiene on the premises and in properly managing solid waste.

The hotel is located at Jayanagar 4th T Block on Swagath Road.

Retd Isro employee strangles wife, later attempts suicide at home

BENGALURU, DHNS: A retired employee of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) allegedly strangled his wife to death at their flat in Bommenahalli, off Old Madras Road, on Wednesday morning.

Police said K Nageshwar Rao, 76, used a towel to strangle his wife, Sandhya Sri (63) in the kitchen of their third-floor apartment around 10.30 am.



K Nageshwar Rao

Sandhya Sri

Rao had retired as a team leader from the U R Satellite Centre (URSC) under the Isro's System Reliability and Quality Assurance (SRQA) division. Sandhya was a painter.

According to preliminary investigations, Rao had been suffering from depression and was undergoing treatment. Police said he had allegedly planned to end his life before killing his wife.

After the incident, Rao called a neighbour around 11 am and confessed. The neighbour alerted a community doctor, who found Sandhya dead and informed the police.

A police team shifted the body for post-mortem and took Rao into custody.

Police sources said the couple, originally from Vijayawada, had been living in the apartment for three years. They lived alone. Their daughter resides in New Jersey, US.

A murder case has been registered at the Avalahalli police station. Further investigation is on.

A senior police officer said Rao's depression appeared to have clouded his judgment.

Believing his wife would not be able to manage without him, he allegedly strangled her before attempting suicide. However, he reportedly stopped out of fear and informed his neighbour about the incident.

Metro trains slow down between Jayanagar, RV Rd

BENGALURU, DHNS: Namma Metro said it had imposed a temporary speed restriction for train movements between the Jayanagar and RV Road stations for ongoing civil maintenance works. However, normal train headways on the Green Line remain unaffected.

IN THE CITY

GENERAL

National seminar: On 'Holemadigara Hadu-50' and 'Dalit poet Siddalingaiah-72'; Inauguration by Ramesh B; Jayakar SM and Shanthala KT to participate; Organised by Nadoja Dr Siddalingaiah Memorial Trust; Government Arts College, Ambedkar Veedhi; 11 am.

Award presentation: Press Club 'Person of the Year Award'; Justice Naganohan Das; PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi; Press Club of Bangalore; 11.30 am.

Birth anniversary: Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj; Inauguration by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah; Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Ministers Shivaraj Tangadagi and Santosh Lad to be present; Ravindra Kalakshetra; from 6 pm onwards.

CULTURAL

Play: 'Varna Pallata'; Directed by Shashidhar Barighat; Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; 7.30 pm.

CITY WEATHER

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky becoming partly cloudy towards evening or night

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.0°C
Minimum	18.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	38%
Sunset (Feb 19)	6:26 pm
Sunrise (Feb 20)	6:41 am
Moonrise	7:10 am
Moonset	7:16 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Trio arrested for kidnapping spa owner to settle online gambling debts

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Electronics City police on Wednesday arrested three men who allegedly abducted a spa owner and demanded Rs 2 lakh to clear online gambling losses of one suspect.

The arrested are Akshay, 26, a BBA graduate and car driver; Manjunath alias Mantapa Manja, 28, a BA graduate and facility manager at an apartment in Gottigere; and Prajwal, 28, a Class 10 pass and warehouse manager with an e-commerce firm. All three lived in and around Bengaluru and have past criminal records.

Police said Manjunath had allegedly misappropriated apartment maintenance funds and lost money in online gambling.

"One of Manjunath's neighbours was a partner of the victim, Ashith Jha, who ran a spa in Akshayanagar. Since the neighbour was living lavishly, Manjunath assumed that kidnapping his partner would fetch him the money he needed to pay off the debts. For three days, the trio watched the victim and his movements," a police investigator said.

Around 9 pm on February 15, Ashith Kumar Jha, 28, from Bihar, was returning home with his shop manager Manukumar when the suspects waylaid them near Bettadasanapura. They rammed their two-wheeler with a car and assaulted them with weapons.

The suspects kidnapped Jha while Manukumar escaped and alerted the police.

"They tied a cloth around Jha's face and forced him inside the car. Aafter Manukumar approached the police, a separate team was formed to investigate. On Monday, Jha's business partner, Prakash Mandal, got a call from Jha, saying he had to pay a ransom of Rs 2 lakh for his release, failing which he would be harmed," a senior police officer said.

A second ransom call came on Tuesday evening, asking Mandal to drop Rs 2 lakh near a coconut plantation.

Police laid a trap and nabbed Akshay when he arrived to collect the cash. This led to the arrest of the others. Jha was rescued near a petrol bunk on S Bingipura Road.

"The suspects had around Rs 1,000 with them and were roaming on the city outskirts in the car along with the victim," a police investigator said.

Man kills 50-year-old wife suspecting infidelity

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 65-year-old daily wager allegedly hacked his wife to death while she slept at their house in Mudalapalya under the Govindarajanagar police station limits on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Devika (50), worked as a domestic help at the city railway station in Majestic. Police have arrested the accused, Kumar. The couple hailed from Tamil Nadu.

Police said the incident took place around 12.45 am when Kumar allegedly attacked Devika with a machete, striking her on the neck and killing her on the spot.

Preliminary investigation showed the couple had recently returned from a family trip to Kerala. Kumar reportedly grew suspicious after Devika spoke to a driver during the trip. The couple also quarrelled often over small issues, as Devika returned home late from work.

After the murder, Kumar allegedly attempted suicide, but their children intervened and stopped him.

Govindarajanagar police were alerted, and they arrested Kumar and handed him over to judicial custody.

Study pressure: Student ends life

BENGALURU, DHNS: An 18-year-old PU student died by suicide on the outskirts of Bengaluru after his parents asked him to focus on studies, police said on Wednesday.

The bot was a resident of Kodihalli in Kanakapura, Bengaluru South district. Originally from Chamarajanagar, his father runs a bakery in Kodihalli. He was studying commerce at a local PU college.

"Due to the exams approaching, his parents had told him to focus on studies and reduce mobile usage," a police investigator said.

On Tuesday, after classes ended, he went to the second floor of his college around 4 pm and jumped.

He suffered grievous injuries and was taken to hospital, where he died.

An Unnatural Death Report (UDR) has been registered, police said.

24-year-old biker dies on birthday

BENGALURU, DHNS: An engineering student died in a head-on collision with a goods vehicle while returning from a temple on his birthday in north Bengaluru.

The deceased, Pavan M (24), was a resident of Thotada Guddadahalli and a second-year engineering student at a private college.

Police said the accident took place near Ivar Kandapura, near Soladevanahalli, on Tuesday evening when he was returning home after visiting a temple.

Preliminary investigation showed a speeding goods vehicle rammed into Pavan's bike in a head-on collision. The impact caused grievous head injuries, and he died on the spot. He was not wearing a helmet.

Passersby alerted the Chikkabanavara traffic police, who rushed to the spot and shifted the body for post-mortem. The truck driver is absconding.

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Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving

Thanks for all favours received.
Keep us blessed.
- Rajeev and Family

Thanksgiving

Thanks for the favours received.
- Margaret

THIRST FOR SOLUTIONS

Design conclave spotlights water crisis

BENGALURU, DHNS

The second edition of the Design Impact Awards Conclave was held on Wednesday.

A social initiative by Titan Company, Design Impact focuses on the transformative power of design to solve real-world problems, encouraging new generation innovators to apply their skills towards challenges of Indian society and sustainability. This year, the initiative focused on addressing the global water crisis.

This edition, six startups — CultYvate, SmartTerra Urban Water Management, Solinas Integrity, EF Polymer, EcoSTP Technologies, and Transwater Systems — were selected and supported with grants of Rs 50 lakh each to implement solutions over the past year.

Of these, the conclave highlighted the ground impact of three startups advancing to the 'Deep Impact' phase, awarded with a pool grant of Rs 3 crore. The three winners announced were CultYvate, SmartTerra Urban Water Management, and Solinas Integrity.

This year, the initiative focused on addressing the global water crisis.

Over the past year, the six grantees piloted scalable solutions across agriculture, urban water management, wastewater recycling, and pipeline inspection.

Transwater Systems' Boson White Water System was used to decentralise wastewater treatment, piloting it at the BWSSB sewage treatment plant in Kadubeesanahalli.

Another grantee, which piloted its project in Bengaluru, is EcoSTP Technologies, focusing on net-zero sewage treatment technology.

The conclave brought together a diverse set of stakeholders from the government, industry, philanthropy, and the social innovation ecosystem.

The event was attended by Ajoy Chawla, Managing Director, Titan Company; Ram Prasath Manohar V, IAS, Chairman, BWSSB; and Srinivasulu, IFS, Principal Secretary, Forest, Environment & Ecology Department, Government of Karnataka, among others.

Govt issues SOP to verify certificates of guest faculty

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Department of Collegiate Education has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to check the fake documents submitted by guest faculty.

Following the allegations that some candidates have submitted fake postgraduate (PG), MPhil, PhD, NET, KSET and Kalyana Karnataka reservation certificates, the department has issued the SOP to college principals to follow and verify the documents submitted by the guest faculties working in the government colleges across the state.

According to the SOP, every government college has to set up a certificate verification committee to verify the authenticity of the certificates submitted by the guest faculty.

Recently, over 200 guest faculty members resigned, fearing inquiry into the documents submitted.

The SOP stated that the principal should ensure that the postgraduation certificate is issued by a university recognised by the University Grant Commission (UGC).

Take steps to restore century-old govt schools, KDA urges CM

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kannada Development Authority (KDA) has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take steps to restore government schools that have been around for more than a century.

In a letter to the CM, KDA Chairperson Purushotham Bilimale pointed to more than 3,200 century-old schools in the state. In the letter, Bilimale pressed for the launch of a dedicated initiative to restore and renovate these historic schools.

Lamenting the failure on the part of the society to appreciate the historical and cultural significance of these old schools, Bilimale said that the KDA was in the process of drafting a detailed report wherein the many challenges faced by these institutions would be laid out in detail.

The KDA has also asked the CM to take steps to simplify Kannada textbooks so learning the language becomes much easier for children. Dubbing the Nali-Kali initiative 'irrelevant', Bilimale said that the KDA had submitted a report on the subject to School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa.

KDA has also pressed the CM to make a budgetary allocation for Kannada-medium schools, besides taking steps to appoint guest teachers for these institutions. "More than 1,000 Kannada-medium schools are awaiting funds from the government. In its report, the School Education Department estimated that these schools require funds to the tune of Rs 922 crore. The CM must consider allocating funds for these schools in the upcoming budget," said Bilimale.

Class 1 admission: Parents again seek age limit relaxation

No question of exemption: Minister Madhu Bangarappa

BENGALURU, DHNS

Parents, whose children are below 6 years but seek admission into grade 1 for the academic year 2026-27, are mounting pressure on the Department of School Education and Literacy to relax the age limit.

A group of parents from Bengaluru has approached Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and also the commissioner for the Department of School Education to consider their request. However, School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa is firm on not relaxing the age limit.

"If we keep considering such requests every year, it will never end. While giving relaxation last year, we clearly stated that it was only for the 2025-26 academic year. From the 2026-27 academic year, to get admission to class 1, the child must be 6 years old by June 1. No question of reconsidering it," Madhu stated.

Speaking to *DH*, a parent said that his daughter would be 12 days short of completing 6 years on June 1. "Just because she is 12 days young, she has to lose one year".

"Many children were promoted from LKG to UKG during the 2025-26 academic year and are seeking admission to class 1. The department must consider the future of such children and give justice," said a parent.

Another parent said, "Earlier, the admission age was between 5 years 10 months and 6 year and it was ideal. Now, even if kids fall short by 5-6 days, there is no provision to get admission. Children born during November and December are facing this (problem)."

It can be recalled that in July 2022, the state government had issued an order mandating that children to be 6 years old by June 1 to get admission for class 1. However, following the protests from parents of lakhs of children, who were already in the system and admitted to LKG and UKG, the government deferred the order and said the same will be implemented from 2025-26.

As per the decision, the rule of 6 years for class 1 admission was supposed to be implemented from 2025-26, but again, the parents brought pressure on the government and managed to get relaxation for that particular year.

Considering the large number of students affected and keeping such students' interest in mind, Madhu, in consultation with the State Education Policy Commission, had given relaxation.

While announcing the same, the minister had clearly stated, "The exemption will be only for the 2025-26 academic year and from 2026-27, no excuses will be given and 6 years by June 1 will be mandatory for admissions to class 1."

Even the Government Order issued clearly stated this. Interestingly, in the same order, the department reiterated the minimum age fixed for admissions to LKG and UKG.

On protest eve, govt offers Rs 1,272 cr for RTC staff arears

To clear 26 months' dues, hold talks on pay hike from April 2025

BENGALURU, DHNS

In a surprise move, the state government on Wednesday announced it would release Rs 1,271.92 crore to clear 26 months of arrears for the employees and officers of Karnataka's four Road Transport Corporations (RTCs).

It also said it would hold discussions and conciliation talks with labour unions on the percentage of pay hike, with effect from April 1, 2025.

The transport secretariat issued a government order to this effect, followed by a press release from Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy.

The announcement came a day before the Bengaluru Chalo protest called by the Joint Action Committee of the Trade Unions of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, which represents six employee unions.

The committee has been demanding Rs 1,785 crore in arrears for 38 months (January 1, 2020, to February 28, 2023) and a 25% pay hike from January 1, 2024.

At a meeting with union representatives on November 26, 2025, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had offered Rs 718.93 crore in arrears for 14 months (January 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023), based on the recommendations of the M R Sreenivasa Murthy committee. He had also proposed a pay hike from April 1, 2026.

The joint committee rejected both offers. In a climbdown, Reddy said the government would now clear arrears for another 12 months (January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021) by releasing Rs 552.99 crore as special grants, and give a pay hike from April 1, 2025.

The government had previously hiked the pay by 15% from March 1, 2023, and promised to clear arrears for the 38 months.

Explaining the delay in clearing arrears, the minister blamed the previous BJP government for announcing the March 2023 pay hike without budgetary allocation.

He said the current government had released Rs 224 crore in arrears to retired employees despite no budgetary allocation.

Of the outstanding liability of Rs 4,900 crore for 2019-2023, the government allowed RTCs to borrow Rs 2,000 crore from banks to clear employees' PF dues and diesel arrears. It pays the principal and interest, he noted.

In the last two and a half years, 7,800 new buses have been inducted for Rs 3,510 crore, and 10,000 new staff have been recruited. The RTCs spend 34.50% of their daily revenue on diesel and 46.37% on staff costs. The government has also exempted the RTCs from motor vehicle tax payments worth Rs 1,219.23 crore, he added.

Vijaya Bhaskar D A, general secretary of KSRTC Staff and Workers' Federation, said they would continue to press for arrears payments of all 38 months and a pay hike from April 1, 2024. "It is employees' hard-earned money. The government cannot deprive them of it."

UGLY & UNKEMPT

Namma Metro pillars are covered with banners of all kinds, leaving the public space looking messy and neglected, near the Deepanjalinagar station in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Hoax threats to courts: Suspects used encrypted email service

Sent through Mail2Tor as it hides IP addresses

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

A probe into the hoax bomb threats to several district courts and the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka high court on Monday revealed that the emails were sent through an encrypted email service, making tracing the suspects extremely difficult.

Highly-placed sources aware of the probe told *DH* that the fraudsters had used the Mail2Tor email service to make the bomb threats. Two of the FIRs in Mangalore North Police Station and Garag Police Station in Dharwad, reviewed by *DH*, noted that the emails were sent by nilaconda_ranjitha@mail2tor.email and nilaconda-ranjutha@mail-2tor.email.

"4RDX IEDs is to blast in the in the premises at 1.15 pm sharp! In the back drop of STOP EWS Reservation Implementation in Tamilnadu (sic)," the email sent to the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court said.

A senior police officer explained that Mail-2Tor cannot be accessed by the common web browsers.

"It is an email service provider on the dark web. It guarantees anonymity and allows its user to send emails without revealing their IP addresses, essentially hiding their location. To access this, one needs a specific web browser called Tor (the Onion Router) Browser and a specific web address, unlike the regular ones we use every day," the officer said.

He added that the service wasn't illegal or banned and is used by many people around the world, especially journalists and whistleblowers, to protect their identity and maintain anonymity. Due to its design, high levels of encryption and lack of activity logs, tracing the origins becomes extremely difficult, the officer said.

"But in the past few years, we have seen a heightened use of this by cybercriminals, especially when it involves making hoax threats over email. We believe that the main motive of these suspects is to create chaos and mischief," the officer added.

On Monday, panic had spread in several parts of the state as threats were received by district courts in Mandya, Bengaluru South District (Ramanagara), Kodagu, Mangaluru, Uttara Kannada (Karwar), Dharwad, Hassan, Haveri and Davanagere, apart from the Dharwad Bench of high court.

Bomb squads, anti-sabotage teams and other officials were engaged in sweeping the court premises, before the threats were declared hoax.

Heavy cost, complex procedures, high precision: Inside a stem cell therapy lab

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) or stem cell transplants, used as a method of treatment for blood disorders and severe autoimmune disease, has now become one of the prominent procedures. But the complexities and the technology around the procedure are still evolving.

A visit to the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT), an accredited centre at a city hospital, helped shed some light on the procedure.

When a person is diagnosed with a disorder requiring bone marrow transplant, a search begins for a donor who can match the Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) of the recipients.

HLA is a protein present on the surface cells which varies from each person and like an identification tag for the cells.

"The protein is 50% from the mother and 50% from the father. Many studies have proved that even sibling's HLA can match only up to 18%," said Rasmi Palassery, consultant, paediatric, oncology and BMT physician.

"When we have about 50% match, we take the donor's stem cell for transplantation. It is enough to save lives," she explained.

After the matching of HLA at the stem cell extraction unit, the blood of the donor is extracted through the veins and the blood is divided into Red Blood Cells (RBC), White Blood Cell (WBC) and the stem cells, which will be extracted.

The other cells are supplied back to the donor through another vein, Dr Deepa D of the department of transfusion medicine & stem cell facility at FACT, explained.

Dr Santosh K Devadas, HoD and consultant, medical oncology and haematology at the hospital, said, "We test the HLA twice, while the normal practice is to test once. It ensures a higher level of safety and compatibility. If the donor has any kind of rare disease, it will be identified in the testing".

"The cells are then preserved in a highly secured at a colder temperature to prevent damage to the cells. For the transplantation, a big freezer is used to transport the cells," said Dr Sujitha Kannan of the department.

Dr Rasmi said, "The procedure can cost anywhere from Rs 6 lakh to Rs 18 lakh. The post procedure maintenance can cost Rs 2 lakh".

Health dept releases Rs 300 cr from KSMSCL funds for drugs at govt hosps

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Health department on Wednesday released an additional Rs 300 crore to procure medicines for government hospitals. They will be purchased for all taluk hospitals, district hospitals, community health centres and primary health centres.

The money is being released from Karnataka State Medical Supply Corporation Limited for next 2 months. It will be transferred from KSMCL to Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust's account. The funds will then be transferred to accounts of government hospitals.

HC declines to entertain PIL on city traffic woes

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka high court on Wednesday disposed of a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions to the authorities to study the traffic congestion of Bengaluru city and take up urgent and necessary construction to mitigate the problem.

"The issue of traffic congestion is required to be addressed by concerned executive authorities. We do not see it appropriate to issue any judicial direction in this regard. We expect that the concerned authorities will take necessary steps as is considered suitable, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha said in the order.

The PIL was filed by A V Amarnathan, a Bengaluru-based advocate. The petitioner cited a 2025 news report that Bengaluru has emerged as the second most congested city after Mexico in the world.

Bengaluru was the sixth most congested city in 2023 and third in 2024, the petitioner said, explaining the worsening traffic congestion in the city. The petitioner further quoted Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivkumar's statement in the media that his children also complain about the traffic congestion in Bengaluru city.

The petitioner cited an incident that occurred on November 30, 2023, when ghazal singer Hariharan was late to the event by an hour and expressed regret stating it took three hours for him to reach the auditorium from the airport. The then Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale (now Supreme court judge), who had attended the event, also agreed with the traffic congestion.

The petitioner stated that traffic congestion will not be solved with only asphalting of roads. According to the petitioner, small flyovers, in some places, may solve the problem. However, the construction of such flyovers takes enormous time which could be curtailed by proper planning and execution.

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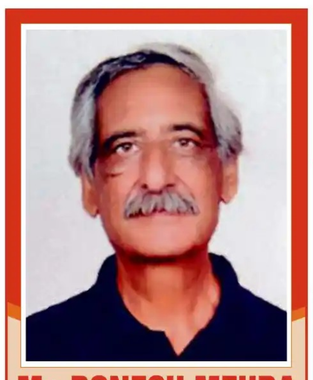

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Govt faces flak over curbs on media talk with legislators at Soudha

Move 'authoritarian, unconstitutional', says Oppn; It's not Cong office: Ashoka

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Opposition parties slammed the ruling Congress on Thursday over its circular imposing restrictions on media interactions inside the Vidhana Soudha (secretariat building), calling it "authoritarian" and "unconstitutional".

The order (dated January 9, 2026) issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR), stated that journalists would no longer be permitted to conduct impromptu interviews in corridors, porticos, staircases or other areas within the Vidhana Soudha, citing security concerns. It restricted media interactions with the CM, ministers, elected representatives and VIPs only at the stipulated location - at the West Gate portico.

'Emergency in K'taka'

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka termed it an "Emergency in Karnataka" and an attempt by the government to cover up its failures and corruption.

"Vidhana Soudha is not the Congress party office. It is the people's House belonging to seven crore Kannadigas. No one has the authority to curb the media there," said Ashoka demanding immediate withdrawal of what he called an "unconstitutional order." while asserting that the media, as the fourth pillar of democracy, must be allowed to function freely.

Citing the recent theft of cash and gold worth lakhs from Urban development minister Byrathi Suresh's chamber, Ashoka asked, "Are you afraid that theft and illegal dealings in the ministers' office would stand exposed."

He also demanded to know if the red colour Constitution book flaunted by Rahul Gandhi mentioned the freedom of the press at all.

State BJP president B Y Vijayendra condemned the move and alleged the order reflected an "authoritarian mindset."

'Press muzzled'

"This is nothing but an attempt to muzzle the press in the name of security. The Congress has a long history of suppressing media, since the Emergency. After passing the hate speech bill, it is trying to restrict the media under the pretext of security. For Congress, the media has always been inconvenient. Withdraw the circular and apologise to members of the media," said Vijayendra alleging the ruling Congress was trying to introduce a feudal mindset inside the 'temple of democracy'.

JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy also criticised the move.

"Rahul Gandhi, who travels across the country holding a copy of the Constitution and delivering speeches on 'freedom of expression' should look at Karnataka, where his own party is in power. Under which provision of the Constitution has the government imposed such restrictions? This is an attempt to cage the media," he said.

When opponent is low, go high: DKS to Cong social media cell

BENGALURU, DHNS: Political battles are no longer fought only during elections but increasingly in the virtual space. The social media war between the ruling Congress and the BJP has intensified amid the "power tussle" in the former.

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief D K Shivakumar on Wednesday reviewed the party's social media wing and offered guidance on strengthening its digital outreach.

"When the opponent goes low, go high," was the message conveyed by the deputy chief minister, as the party seeks to leverage its social media potential to push positive messaging to the grassroots.

The social media team, headed by Aishwarya Mahadev, was advised to focus on strengthening the organisation and amplifying its message to reach booth and grassroots-level workers.

Shivakumar directed that responses to use of derogatory language from opponents must be fact-based and incisive. He instructed the team to remain respectful in all public discourse and maintain a disciplined communication strategy.

He also urged the team to stay vigilant and flag all "serious violations" by the BJP. According to party leaders, opposition parties are allegedly spreading fake news and filing false cases against the Congress workers.

To counter this, the social media wing will remain in constant coordination with the party's legal team to address what leaders described as false cases and misinformation campaigns.

Don't discuss alliance with BJP in public, Nikhil tells JD(S) members

BENGALURU, DHNS: JD(S) Youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Wednesday asked members of his party not to discuss alliance with BJP in public.

"Disagreements among allies should be discussed and sorted out within four walls, and not on streets. It's not BJP or JD(S), but NDA that will win 140 to 150 seats in next Assembly elections," Nikhil told reporters here.

Reminding everyone that the BJP's alliance with JD(S) had been approved by the saffron party's central leadership, Nikhil said, "Local leaders of two districts have been speaking about this alliance to get publicity".

Power struggle has lowered dignity of CM's chair: Ashoka

Come clean on DKS' claim on power pact, he tells CM, Rahul

BENGALURU, DHNS

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka on Wednesday alleged that the derogatory language used by the Congress leaders amid the ongoing power struggle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar has lowered the dignity of the chief minister's chair.

R Ashoka

He was referring to statements by Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa that "The tail is wagging the dog," reportedly suggesting that those without primary authority were controlling the leadership narrative.

Ashoka said, "When senior leaders compare the fight for the chief minister's post to dogs fighting on the street, it lowers the dignity of the chief minister's chair."

The controversy has escalated after Congress leader D K Suresh countered Mahadevappa's remarks, saying "original Congressmen are loyal dogs," indicating that the chief minister and his followers were "outsiders" (partyhoppers).

"Now, Congress should clarify who is a stray dog and who is the loyal one. Is this how the ruling party speaks about its leadership? The dignity of the government and the sanctity of the Vidhana Soudha have been compromised. Such public exchange has turned the chief minister's post into a joke," Ashoka said.

Mocking Shivakumar's statement that he had the backing of "all 140 MLAs", including Siddaramaiah, Ashoka said, "Whose supporters are the legislators who are on a foreign tour? Legislators on the foreign tour are all Siddaramaiah's supporters."

"This is just a small injection for Shivakumar. If this tussle continues, soon all legislators will fly abroad. Also, Siddaramaiah has denied the power-sharing agreement and said he will table the budget."

"Shivakumar has claimed there was a pact that Siddaramaiah would reveal at the right time. Isn't this blackmail politics? The chief minister must clarify if there is a power-sharing agreement or not," Ashoka demanded, also urging Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to respond.

'Pauper CM should not present budget'

Alleging that the government lacks funds, Ashoka said Siddaramaiah is a "pauper CM" and should not present the budget.

"The state government has not released financial aid (Rs 75 crore) to feed over 24,000 destitute children for the past seven months. Karnataka had vowed that no child would go hungry, but this regime has let them starve," he said.

He added that the Gruha Lakshmi and Anna Bhagya instalments for February and March had not been released either.

The state road transport employees are going on a strike because the government has failed to pay the arrears for 38 months. The government has gone bankrupt, charged Ashoka.

Ashoka also alleged large-scale corruption in tenders.

"The chief minister is evasive. The ministers are indulging in a 'package deal'. The Contractors' Association has accused the government of favouring Andhra Pradesh-based firms in Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board works, as they don't want local contractors to expose them. Telangana is developing at our cost, as it is a match fixing between the two governments," he claimed.

"The ministers are sending huge amounts of money to Rahul Gandhi for the upcoming elections," he charged.

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Congress govt will fall soon, says Yatnal

MUDGAL (RAICHUR DISTRICT), DHNS: Taking a dig at the tour politics of the Congress legislators, Bijapur City MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Wednesday predicted the fall of Congress government in the state.

Speaking to reporters here, Yatnal said, "Implementing guarantee schemes has drained the state coffers. The Siddaramaiah government has no funds to allocate for the development of constituencies. The factional feud in the Congress between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar camps have left the Congress legislators helpless. Now, a section of party legislators have left for a foreign tour."

Siddaramaiah will not relinquish CM chair. I don't think Shivakumar will become chief minister, Yatnal said. When asked about if BJP will get new state president, Yatnal said he has no idea.

Court authorities go through documents after confiscating properties from the office of the managing director of the Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited over non-payment of compensation dues to farmers at Almatti in Vijayapura district on Wednesday. DH PHOTO

Farmers' dues: Properties confiscated from KBJNL managing director's office

ALMATTI (VIJAYAPURA DISTRICT), DHNS: Court authorities, on Wednesday, confiscated properties from the office of the managing director of the Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited (KBJNL) over non-payment of compensation dues to farmers, following a court order in this regard.

Lands had been taken from the farmers for constructing canals as part of stage 3 of the Upper Krishna Project (UKP).

In the past, in similar cases, properties used to be confiscated from the office of the land acquisition officer of KBJNL.

But this is the first that properties have been confiscated from the MD's office, pertaining to two cases.

Among the properties seized are an Innova car, a jeep, fax machine, photocopying machine, an almirah, 13 computers, tables, chairs, bulbs, printer machines and a ceiling fan.

BJP's spl state executive meeting today

BENGALURU, DHNS: BJP state president B Y VIjayendra said on Wednesday that the saffron party's special state executive meeting on Thursday (February 19) would discuss strengthening the organisation to deal with the upcoming elections.

Addressing reporters, the state BJP president said, "There are byelections in the Bagalkot and Davanagere south constituencies. There is also a possibility of a byelection in Bagepalli constituency. Zilla and taluk panchayat elections and Greater Bengaluru Authority elections are also on the cards. The next six months can be termed an election phase, and we will extensively discuss strengthening the organisation."

He said over 1,250 members would participate in the meeting, including former chief ministers B S Yediyurappa, D V Sadananda Gowda, Jagadish Shettar, Basavaraj Bommai, union ministers Pralhad Joshi, V Somanna and Shobha Karandlaje.

Slamming the ruling Congress government as "corrupt, anti-poor, anti-farmer and anti-youth," he said, there would be discussions on how to unseat it from power.

Budget demands: Sop for marrying farmers, fund for sexual minorites

BENGALURU, DHNS

Kunigal Congress MLA H D Ranganath has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to introduce a scheme offering financial incentives to women who marry farmers, saying rural areas are facing a shortage of brides for agricultural men.

Ranganath said many women are reluctant to move to villages after marriage, forcing farmers to seek alliances from distant places.

He has written to the government seeking a dedicated incentive for daughters-in-law of agricultural families in the 2026-27 Budget to improve the lives of farming households.

Ranganath also called for increased irrigation grants and a new medical college for Kunigal.

His remarks came after a farmers' delegation met the chief minister, raising concerns over farm distress and seeking revival of a Rs 10,000 assistance scheme.

Rs 200 cr sought for sexual minorities

Meanwhile, the Movement for Gender and Sexual Pluralism (MGSP) has urged the government to allocate Rs 200 crore annually for gender and sexual minorities.

Member Nisha Gulur said the Budget should also announce a development corporation, housing support, interest-free loans, pensions, healthcare facilities and rehabilitation assistance for the community.

Corrigendum

In an article titled 'Arun Yogiraj to sculpt 87 pillars at 87 places Gandhi visited in state' published on February 18, it was wrongly mentioned that Mahatma Gandhi's first visit to Karnataka (then the princely state of Mysore) was in 2015.

Gandhi's first visit to the state was in 1915. The error is regretted.

Road-rage cases in Bengaluru almost triple...

Road-rage, from Page 1

From the total number of cases registered, 93 people were arrested in the last year, with the Southwest seeing the most arrests at 26, despite having only 10 reported cases. While Whitefield saw 15 arrests, South, West and Central divisions saw 12, 11 and 10 arrests, respectively. While the East reported seven cases, only one arrest was made. Southeast and Northeast divisions reported six and four arrests, respectively, and the North five.

Seemanth Kumar Singh, Bengaluru Police Commissioner, said: "A case of road rage doesn't end well for anyone. Many people aren't aware that a case for road rage is filed under law and order, based on the severity of the case. While there have been more reported cases lately, not all of them have been violent. In most cases, Hoysala patrol teams intervene and de-escalate the situation in time."

He added that a special campaign on road rage could help raise awareness.

Of the 11 cases reported this year, Bengaluru East and Whitefield saw three incidents each, while the South, Southwest and Northeast reported one each.

Though the Central division reported only two cases this year, eight people have been arrested. As of January 27, there have been 16 arrests in road-rage cases across the city.

A senior official from Bengaluru East said that in severe cases or repeat offences, the vehicles involved are seized and the licences of owners are sent to the RTO concerned for suspension. Most commonly, Section 126 of BNS is invoked in road-rage cases. It implies wrongful restraint.

Police officials also attributed the rising cases to the worsening traffic congestion in the city, "pushing people to overreact in the moment".

Safaris to resume with reduced duration, vehicle numbers

Excess vehicles, staff to patrol forest fringes, curb conflicts

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka has decided to resume safari operations at Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves in a phased manner, based on the preliminary report of a technical committee that assessed eco-tourism capacity in the wake of rising human-wildlife conflict.

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre told reporters on Wednesday that the decision was taken following a review of the interim findings of the expert panel at a high-level meeting held at Vikasa Soudha.

Safari operations in the two tiger reserves have been suspended since November 7, 2025, following a series of fatal tiger attacks that triggered concerns over human-wildlife conflict in forest-fringe areas.

The committee, consisting of additional principal chief conservator of forests, a scientist from Wildlife Institute of India and a professor from Indian Institute of Forest Management, submitted its interim report, which was examined before arriving at the decision to resume operations in phases.

Khandre said safari timings and vehicle numbers would be reduced in the first phase. At Bandipur, safari duration has been reduced from eight hours to five hours.

In Sunkadakatte zone, operations will be restricted to six hours, while in Nagarahole, safaris will initially be permitted for four hours a day, the minister said.

The government has decided to resume safari operations in Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves in phases, in a balancing act aimed at addressing both conservation concerns and economic needs. The move follows an interim report submitted by an expert committee.

"Only 50% of the vehicles that were operating prior to the suspension will be allowed in first phase. The remaining vehicles and frontline staff will be deployed to strengthen patrolling in forest-fringe villages to prevent wild animals from entering human habitations," he said.

Khandre said the decision to lift the ban was taken following protests by thousands of local residents, including farmers and resort workers, who argued that the safari suspension had severely affected their livelihoods.

"Both life and livelihood must be protected," the minister said, adding that the government had opted for a regulated and phased reopening to strike a balance between conservation concerns and economic needs.

Senior officials maintained that there is no scientific basis to conclude that safari operations are responsible for tigers straying into human settlements.

"Bandipur tiger reserve spans 1,036 sq km, of which 80 sq km (8%) is designated as tourism zone. Nagarahole covers 844 sq km, with only 63 sq km (7.5%) earmarked for eco-tourism activities," officials said.

Responding to media reports that the National Tiger Conservation Authority had raised objections to tiger capture operations in the state, the minister clarified that all actions were undertaken in accordance with NTCA's standard operating procedures and with the involvement of a committee that includes an NTCA representative.

Stakeholders pushed for lifting ban on safari

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka's decision to lift the ban on safari in Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves follows pressure from stakeholders, including tourism operators, ahead of the summer holiday season.

The government had banned the safari on November 7, 2025, following a series of deadly tiger attacks, and formed a technical committee to assess further course of action.

S Mahalingaiah Manu, vice-president of the Karnataka Tourism Society, argued that banning safari is not a solution to the man-animal conflict. "Safari has helped the people and animals of the forest. When animals get caught in the poachers' net, it is the safari drivers who notify the Forest Department and save the lives of the animals. When animals fight among themselves and get injured, it is again the safari that has saved them," he told *DH*.

He further claimed that over 3,000 locals from forest areas have been employed in the establishments, giving them better opportunities for a better life.

"Only people in managerial positions have been brought from other parts of the state or country," Manu added.

A tourism industry expert, speaking on the condition of anonymity, pointed out that Karnataka uses only up to 10% of the forest for tourism.

"In 2012, the Supreme Court permitted using 20% of forest areas for tourism activities but restricted further expansions. So we were only allowed 10% forest usage, which restricts the activities we can host. If the main activity is banned, there is nothing Karnataka can bank on," the expert added.

Manu estimated that the ban on safari resulted in losses of Rs 400 crore and would have reached Rs 750 crore had the ban not been lifted.

Shree Raj, proprietor of a prominent travel agency in Bengaluru, said bookings have been diverted to Tamil Nadu (Masinagudi), Kerala (Wayanad) and Maharashtra.

"Usually, we would get safari bookings from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Gurgaon, especially for two months before schools close for summer holidays. This year, we have not received a single booking," he said.

Vinay Luthra, former principal chief conservator of forests, said: "Man-animal conflict has nothing to do with tourism or safari. They should bring in better advanced technology beyond mapping to focus on safety rather than banning it outright."

State notifies Act to shrink lake...

Buffer zones, from Page 1

The amendment is expected to help the government construct roads, bridges, water supply lines, sewage treatment plants and other infrastructure. The act now notes that the permission to these activities can be awarded "after ensuring that the original capacity of the tanks is not reduced or cause any obstruction at the natural or normal course of inflow or outflow of water into, or from, the tanks on the upstream and or downstream even after such works".

The amendment was opposed by citizen groups, environmentalists and experts citing that reduction of buffer zones will harm the lakes and create ecological imbalance.

"The reduction in buffer zones will do more harm than good to the lakes. When you see reduction, what follows is nothing but destruction," said Ramya V S, a citizen of Hebbal.

Experts pointed out that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had registered a suo motu case in this regard and the state government's move is disappointing.

"This is very unfortunate. The case is yet to be heard and the state government's move at this point of time is disappointing," said V Ramaprasad, convenor of Federation of Bengaluru Lakes (FBL), representing 47 citizen groups.

The federation will challenge the government's move at an appropriate level, he added.

Google to set up India-US subsea cable for AI

Google, from Page 1

The company plans to develop a direct fibre-optic path between Vizag and Chennai on India's east coast to South Africa. When combined with the Equiano and Nuvem subsea cable systems, this will create a redundant high-capacity route that connects the American east coast around Africa to Vizag.

"Additionally, we are delivering a direct path between Vizag and Singapore. When combined with the Bosun and Tabua subsea cable systems, this will create a South Pacific route that connects the American west coast through Australia to Vizag," Google said in a blog post.

These investments will establish Vizag as a major international subsea gateway, adding vital diversity from existing landings in Mumbai and Chennai. For a nation of more than one billion people, this will increase the resilience of India's digital backbone and improve economic security, it said.

Meanwhile, Pichai met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit.

"It was a delight to meet Mr Sundar Pichai on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit in Delhi. Talked about the work India is doing in AI and how Google can work with our talented students and professionals in this field," Modi said in a post on X.

In October last year, Google announced plans to invest $15 billion over the next five years to set up a major artificial intelligence data centre at Vizag, Andhra Pradesh. This is one of the largest investments in IT infrastructure in India.

Pichai also announced a $30 million grant to support AI research in India. The company plans to run AI for Science Impact Challenge to support work in areas including quantum computing and climate modelling. The programme will be implemented through Google.org.

Google also announced collaboration with the Indian government's initiative 'Karma Yogi Bharat' to train two crore public servants across 800 districts in 18 languages. Generative AI support will be extended to over 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs, reaching 1.1 crore students, Google said.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast Feb 19: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	31.4	16.2	00
Bidar	31.5	16.4	00
Vijayapura	31.5	17.8	00
Dharwad	31.4	15	00
Haveri	31.8	19.2	00
Kalaburagi	34.3	19.5	00
Raichur	32	18	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	33.3	20.8	00
Karwar	35.4	21	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	33.3	23.5	00

INTERIOR SOUTH	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	NA
Bengaluru	29.8	17.9	00
Ballari	34.1	20.2	00
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	30.3	17.7	00
Davangere	33	12.5	00
Hassan	31.4	12.5	00
Mysuru	31.2	19	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	30	13	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	30.9	15.8	00
Kolkata	29.6	17.4	00
Mumbai	31	22.4	00
Chennai	30.4	21.5	00
Pune	33.5	17.1	00
Hyderabad	31.2	19	00
Th'puram	35.2	25.3	00

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
ENGINEERING WING
Office of the Chief Engineer, Arogya Soudha, 3rd floor, Leprosy Hospital Premises, 1st Cross, Magadi Road, Bengaluru-560 023,
Telephone No.**080-29557023**, E-mail: **cekhsdrp@gmail.com**
No: HFWD/EW/CE/TA-1/AE-2/TND//2025-26/4017 Date: 18.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Chief Engineer, HFWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru invites tender from eligible contractors registered in KPWD in two tender document system in KPP Protal for the work of **"Construction of District Health & Family Welfare Officer Office on existing 3rd Floor Building of Praja Soudha at Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada District (Balance work)."** Approximate Amount put to tendert (Excluding GST): **Rs. 384.00 Lakhs.** Earnest Money Deposit: **Rs. 5.76 Lakhs.** Stipulated period for Completion: **11 Months (including monsoon).**

Calendar of Events: (1) Last date for receipt of tenders: **20.03.2026 up to 16.00 hrs. (2)** Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids): **23.03.2026 at 11.00 hrs.**

The tender details can be downloaded from the KPP Platform. Tenders shall be submitted electronically at **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically. Interested eligible contractors shall register on the KPP Platform to participate in this tender.

NOTE: (1) All the rights are reserved by the undersigned for postponement or cancellation of entire tender process, rejection of bids/individual bid etc., without assigning any reason. **(2)** Henceforth, any changes in the schedule/contents will not be published through newspapers and further changes will be updated only on KPP Portal.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, H&FWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi
No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-4/TENDER/2025-26/7168 DATE: 13/02/2026

Short term E-Tender Notification

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise e-Tenders from Registration in KPWD Department authorized by Karnataka Government for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 2 works under head of account 4059-SCP (CMIDP) and 1 work under head of account 4059-TSP (CMIDP), Totally 3 No. of works, amount put to tender is minimum of Rs. 40.00 Lakhs and maximum of Rs. 80.00 Lakhs.

Calendar of events:1)Last date for queries & clarifications : 23-02-2026up to 5.30 PM, 2)Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 25-02-2026up to 5.00 PM,3)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 27-02-2026at 4.30 PM, 4)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 5)If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in& departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
PWD Division Chikodi.
DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1868/KSMCA/2025-26

AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE, MALUR
PH: 08151-235032
No: APMC/M/465/2025-26 Dated : 12.02.2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPPP Portal)

Competitive E-Tenders are invited as per KW-3 in E-Tender Website: **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** by PWD Contractors For the Construction of Dual Carriageway Concrete Road and Drainage in front of the 2nd Gate in the Main Market Yard of Malur APMC. Tender Amount Rs.85,18,649/-, E.M.D Rs.1,70,500/- & Period of Completion 5 ½ Months. Last Date of Receipt of **Tenders 24.03.2026 up to 5 pm Open Date of Tenders 26.03.2026 up to 11 am**

Terms and Conditions and other information obtained from A.P.M.C.,Office or from the above Mentioned website.

Sd/- **Sd/-**
(Ranju Mouly) **(Kiran. N)**
Secretary **Administrator**
A.P.M.C.,Malur **A.P.M.C.,Malur**

DIPR/KOLAR/RO:504/KSMCA/2025-26

ಪಿ ಎಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ನಂ.2 ಮಂಗಳೂರು, ಎಕ್ಕೂರು, ಅಂಚೆ ಕಂಕನಾಡಿ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು-02
PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA No.2,
Ekkur, Kankanady (P.O), Mangaluru-575002

WALK IN INTERVIEW FOR CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS

A Walk In Interview will be conducted on **27.02.2026 (Friday)** to prepare panel for the following posts on contractual basis for the session 2026-27. It will be held in the Vidyalaya Premises as per the following details. Registration time from **08.30 AM to 9.30 AM.**

Sl. No	POST / SUBJECT	DATE
1	PGT (Computer Science, English, Physics, Chemistry, Maths & Biology)	27-02-2026 (Friday)
2	TGT (English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Maths, Science, S.St.), TGT (Art Education) & Computer Instructor	
3	PRT, Balvatika Teacher (ECCE) & Miscellaneous category (Music, Sports coach, Yoga coach, Nurse, Special Educator, Kannada Teacher and Counsellor)	

For details of eligibility, pay & application form, please log on https://no2managalore.kvs.ac.in/. Candidates should bring the filled-up Application form (available on website), Original Certificates and self-attested copies of all Certificates & one recent passport size Photograph on the date of interview. No TA/DA will be paid for attending interview.

Phone: 0824-2244755 **Sd/- Principal**

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : TTMC 'A' Block 5th Floor, BMTC Building, KH Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027.
Phone: 080-22278813/14/15/16, Fax : 080-22213172
Website: https://ksmc.karnataka.gov.in

No.153/KSMCL/MECH/KMM,SIOM, TIOM/W-Tanker/2025-26/3156 Date: 18.02.2026

e-TENDER INVITATION

KSMCL Invites E-tender for Purchase of 10 KL Capacity Three Numbers Water Tanker to Karya Magnesite Hullahalli, Nanjanagudu Tq. Mysore District, and Subbrayanahalli and Thimmappana gudi Iron Ore Mines Sandur, Sandur Tq, Ballari Dist, Karnataka

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Commencement to Download from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	18.02.2026
Last date for receiving the queries through e-procurement portal	20.02.2026 up to 11:00 am
Last date and Time for uploading e-tender in E-Procurement platform on or before	04.03.2026 up to 5:00 pm
The Technical bid will be opened online by the Authorized officers on	06.03.2026 At 11:00 am
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.1,98,000/-

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement GOK Platform website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Contact for any support in uploading & registration, E-procurement Helpdesk: 080-46010000/ 68948777.

Sd/-
General Manager (A&V)
DIPR/CP/5711/AKAR/2025-26

Government of Karnataka
MINOR IRRIGATION AND GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Division, Jayanagar Shopping Complex, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011
No. EE/MI & GWD/BNG/AE-1&5/32/2025-26 Datd : 18.02.2026

Tender Notification

On the behalf of the Hon'ble of State of Karnataka, as per K.T.P.P. with latest amendments, Item wise tenders are invited for the works mentioned under H/A : 4702 SCP (CD) from the eligible contractors of suitable category registered under KPWD. For further details, visit website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Name of the work: (1) Construction of Check dam near in Thittahalli Villge, Yeshwantpur assembly constituency. Bangalore Urban, Bangalore South. Construction of Check dam Across Halla behind Venkatappa Land in Hanumanahalli Village, Shivanahalli Gramapanchayath, & Construction of Check dam Across Mavathuru Lake Stream in Adanakuppe Village, Kallalli Gramapanchayath, Kanakapura Taluk, Bengaluru South District.
Total Number of work - 03
Amount Put to Tender (Rs in Lakhs) : Minimum: **Rs.160.29** Maximum: **Rs.200.81** EMD: Minimum: **Rs.2,40,500/-** Maximum: **Rs.3,01,300/-**
Period of Completion: 9 Months including Monsoon,
(Tender Amount, EMD Amount and Period Completion as per the works noted in KPPP Portal)
(1) Tender will be published through KPPP Portal on Dated: **18.02.2026 at 16.30 Hours, (2)** Last date of queries: **27.02.2026 at 15.00 Hours, (3)** Pre Bid Meeting Date & Time: **24.02.2026 at 11.30 Hours, (4)** Last Date for Receipt of Tenders on Dated: **28.02.2026 at 16.30 Hours, (5)** Technical Bid will be opened on Dated: **02.03.2026 at 11.30 Hours, (6)** Financial Bid will be opened on Dated: **After approval of Technical bid.**
Conditions: 1) Terms and conditions and other details may be obtained through kppp portal at the website address **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** **2)** Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in clause KW-4 of ITT in Standard Tender document. **3)** Bidder should quote the rates Excluding GST. **4)** Rights are reserved for postponement or cancellation of any or all Tenders.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division
DIPR/CP/5734/SHIRDI SAI/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿ DISTRICT HOSPITAL, BALLARI.
ಎಸ್‌ಟಿಡಿ–08392, ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಕರು–274255 ಸ.ಆ.ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ–274254
E-mail bellaryds@gmail.com

APPOINTMENT NOTIFICATION

For Financial Year 2025-26 District Hospital, Ballari invited applications for the post of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (Junior Consultant) for the DNB Course under National Health Mission Programme. This appointment is purely on contract basis for one year. Interested eligible candidates should attend walk in interview with Original Documents and 1 set of Xerox copies.
Date of Interview:23/02/2026 Time:11:00 AM
Place of interview: District Hospital, Ballari.
Department: Junior Consultant in Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology . **Post:** 01. **Remmunaration:** Rs.1,30,000/- **Qualification:** MD/DNB/Degree in concerned specialty. **Age Limit:** 70 Years
Conditions for recruitment of Junior Consultant:-
1.Should have a minimum of 5 years of experience after qualifying MD /MS / DNB or equivalent in the specialty concerned (The Qualification in the specialty should be a recognized qualification as per the provision of IMC Act.). 2.Candidate should have an MD/DNB Degree in concerned Specialty and should not be recruited person in any other Medical College / Hospital. 3.Candidate should be registered under the Karnataka Medical Council (KMC). 4.The speacialists DNB (Junior Consultant) will recruit for one year. 5.Age limit for recruitment: The specialist DNB PG teacher should be within 70 years of age and should be in good physical and mental health. He/she should be capable of carrying out the duties of the PG Teacher in teaching and training the DNB candidates. 6.DNB OBG Specialists monthly remmunaration of Rs.1,30,000/- (One lakhs thirty thousand rupees only).

Sd/- District Surgeon, District Hospital, Ballari
DIPR/Ballari/1022/KSMCA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ,
ಆಕುಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ,
ಎನ್.ಪಿ.ಸಿ.ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ ಆವರಣ, ನಜರ್‌ಬಾದ್, ಮೈಸೂರು – 10.
(Ph. No: 0821-2979772 E-mail:-khsdrp.divmys@gmail.com)
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಆಕುಕ/ಇಂ.ವಿ./ಕಾ.ಅ/ಮೈ/ಸಇ–1&2/ಟೆಂಡರ್–31 & 26–2ನೇ ಕರೆ ಮತ್ತು 15–3ನೇ ಕರೆ/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.02.2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮೈಸೂರು ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಡುವ ಮೈಸೂರು, ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು ಮಟ್ಟದ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಸಮುದಾಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಾಥಮಿಕ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳ ದುರಸ್ಥಿ ಮತ್ತು ನವೀಕರಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಾಯಿಸಲಾದ ಮೂರನೇ ದರ್ಜೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮೇಲ್ಮಟ್ಟ ಅರ್ಹ ಸಿವಿಲ್ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ರೂ.90.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ರೂ.20.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರೆ ವಿವರಗಳು: 1) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ:23.02.2026 ರಂದು 16.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ **2)** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ (ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್): 24.02.2026 ರಂದು 16.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ವಿದ್ಯುನ್ಮಾನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ವೇದಿಕೆ ಮೂಲಕ (Through KPPP) https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ದಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು.
ಸೂಚನೆ: 1) ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವವರು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಮುಂದೂಡುವ/ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸುವ/ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಿರಾಕರಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. **2)** ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳು ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ, ಬದಲಾಗಿ ವಿದ್ಯುನ್ಮಾನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ವೇದಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು,
ಆಕುಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮೈಸೂರು.
DIPR/DDMYS/1680/KSMCA/953/2025-26

Ramzan begins

BENGALURU, DHNS: Ramzan, the ninth Islamic month during which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, will begin on Thursday. According to the Central Moonsighting Committee of Karnataka, although the crescent moon was not sighted in B'luru on Wednesday, it was spotted in Vijayawada, Aurangabad, Mewat, Bihar, Jharkhand and Punjab. The committee unanimously decided that first day of Ramzan 1447 will be Feb 19.

Worker, house owner die of suffocation in septic tank

KALABURAGI, DHNS: A labourer and a house owner died of suffocation while cleaning the septic tank of the toilet at Hirapur near here on Wednesday.

The deceased are house owner Shivakumar Kashinath (52), a resident of Madarasana village, and labourer Ratan Bhujangarao (60), of Indira Nagar. Ratan had been called in clear the waste accumulated in the septic tank.

Ratan experienced breathing problem after he entered the pit. Kashinath went down into the pit in a bid to rescue him. But both of them died due to suffocation. A case has been registered at the Ashoka Nagar police station in this regard.

B'luru garbage disposal row turns into political slugfest

Garbage, from Page 1

However, officials of the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) claimed that these facilities were running smoothly.

It is learnt that a few MLAs such as Krishna Byre Gowda (Congress), Manjula Limbavali (BJP), S T Somashekar (expelled from BJP), Dheeraj Muniraju (BJP), M Krishnappa (Congress) have resisted dumping of garbage in their constituencies, especially after the state government did not approve a special grant of Rs 350 crore promised in the Bengaluru civic body's annual budget.

Shivakumar warned that strict action would be initiated under the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) if the blockade continued and alleged that BJP MLAs were behind the obstructions. Stating that MLAs cannot blackmail the government for funds, he warned BJP legislators that the garbage would be dumped in front of their houses and BJP offices if they continued to obstruct the disposal of waste.

"If Arvind Limbavali and Dheeraj Muniraju keep objecting to the disposal of waste in their constituencies for want of funds, where do we dispose of the garbage? We will have to send it to the homes of R Ashoka, Vijayendra or the BJP party office," he said and added that the processing plants and landfills had existed even before he took over as the Bengaluru development minister.

Reacting to the accident that killed a boy, he said the law will take its course in such cases but the garbage disposal can't be stopped.

"The waste is being disposed of in the constituencies of S T Somashekar, B Shivanna and Krishna Byre Gowda also."

Meanwhile, Ashoka warned that within the next two days, Bengaluru would turn "stenchy" as garbage was not being cleared, and garbage lorries and auto rickshaws were stranded on the outskirts.

Cautioning that public anger would mount, Ashoka demanded the immediate release of funds.

"Earlier, there was a garbage contractor mafia from Andhra in Bengaluru. Today, the state government is the mafia. There is a 7% commission to award a tender, another 7% each for settling the bill and issuing a special NOC. The government takes 21%, and the engineers swallow 71%. There is nothing left for picking up the garbage," alleged the BJP leader.

MLA Muniraju denied the allegation that he blackmailed the government for funds.

"I have not sought a single penny under the solid waste management. I neither want any funds nor the waste from Bengaluru. The government is free to impose ESMA and send me to jail. I will not fear threat," he said, adding that Doddaballapur gets about 72 compactors of Bengaluru's waste daily.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda

Palce Orchards Branch, NO. 344/8, 4th Main, Upper Palace Orchards, Bengaluru-560080 Ph: 080-23617185, E-mail : vjpaor@bankofbaroda.co.in

LOCKER BREAK OPEN NOTICE

This is the information of our valued potron who has teken loockers on rent at below mentioned **Bank of Baroda, Palce Orchards Branch, Bengaluru** and have committed breach of agreement. The notices sent as per RBI/Bank's guideline to the renters at their recorded addresses have been returned undelivered stating either person/s addresses not found or left. Efforts to contact the locker holders in person at their present whereabout could not be ascertained. Thus. having no alternative, the notice is given to the persons named below for contacting branch and to clear the dues of the Bank within a period of 15 days, failing which the bank will proceed to Break Open the Lockerat their cost, risk and responsibility and the Bank will exercise its ritht to lien recovery of outstanding rent cost and other charges.

BRANCH : Place Orchards

Locker Hirer Name : Deepti Diwakar, No. 233/4, 18th Cross, Rajkumar House, Sadashivanagar, Bangalore, Locker No. : 7411AX0020, Rent Overdue : 16689.50, Open Date : 15.05.2026, 10.30 AM

Place : Bengaluru, Date : 16.02.2026 **Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda**

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender No. LRC-3_CT_ LHB_NAC-RSP-R2, dated 16.02.2026. E-Tender (Open Tender) is invited online by Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (LHB), Carriage and Wagon Workshop, Eastern Railway, Liluah, Howrah-711204 from tenderers having financial and technically capabilities for the following work: **Name of Work**: "Upgradation of Toilet in LHB Non-AC Coaches" . **Approx. Cost of works:** ₹ 65,20,67,374.00; **Earnest Money:** ₹ 34,10,300.00; **Tender Document Cost:** 0.00; **Tender Closing date and time :** 06.03.2026 at 14.00 hrs. **Website where complete details of Tender is available alongwith corrigendum-1 : www.ireps.gov.in** Tenderers are advised to check IREPS portal frequently to find if any corrigendum is published after publication of Tender Notice.

MISC-400/2025-26

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM NO. - 2
DATE - 16/02/2026

Item - As published in NIT:JBP-PROJECT-EPC 2025-02 Date 08/01/2026 on IREPS, **Last Date & time of Submission of Tender-** 19/02/2026 up to 15:00 hrs., **Modified date on IREPS**- 27/02/2026 up to 15:00 hrs., Rest items shall remain same and unaltered.

Sd./-
For Dy. CEE (Project)
West Central Railway, Jabalpur

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
Engineering Works

Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Central Railway, Solapur on Behalf of President of India, invites e-tender from the reputed firms / contractor for the following works. **1. Tender Notice No.:** 02-2026-SrDENC **Name of Work:** 1) TRR(P) - 32.705 km in KWV-MRJ section, 15 Km in KWV-LUR section under Sr.DEN(C) section and TFR - 39.8 km in Solapur division. 2) Extension of ballast siding at Bhigvan station and creation of new ballast siding at Kavthemahankal station under Sr.DEN(C) section **Approximate Cost of the work:** Rs. 5,85,95,067.17 **Earnest Money:** Rs. 4,43,000.00 **Completion period of the work:** 18 Months **Maintenance Period**: Nil **Tender Notice No.:** 03-2026-SrDENC **Name of Work:** Hiring of truck of 10 MT capacity for transportation of P Way materials for 1500 kms per month for - 1) SSE/P.Way/JH & KWV(N) under ADEN/KWV(BG), 2) SSE/P.way/LUR & BTW under ADEN/LUR and 3) SSE/P.way/PVR & MRJ under ADEN/PVR for period of 2 years under Sr.DEN/C/SUR section in Solapur division (Total 06 nos. of trucks for 10 MT capacity for period of 2 year). **Approximate Cost of the work:** Rs. 1,47,21,237.51 **Earnest Money:** Rs. 2,23,600.00 **Completion period of the work:** 24 Months **Maintenance Period:** Nil **Last date & Time of uploading quoted tender on www.ireps.gov.in website:** 11/03/2026 upto 15:00 hrs **Date & Time of Opening of tender on www.ireps.gov.in :** 11/03/2026 at 15:30 hrs The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. Website: **www.ireps.gov.in**. ANJ-16

TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
Engineering Works

Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Central Railway, Solapur on Behalf of President of India, invites e-tender from the reputed firms / contractor for the following works. **1. Tender Notice No.:** 03-2026-SrDENS **Name of Work:** 1. Improvement to approach road at LC 22,24,31,49 in KWV-MRJ section & Provision of standard height gauge at LC 70 in KWV-MRJ section 2. Improvement to approach road at LC 61,74,82,91,3 in SUR-WD section & Provision of standard height gauge at LC 82, 91 & 3 in SUR-WD section. 3. Improvement to gate lodges and other miscellaneous works for safety of road users in Sr.DEN(S) section. **Approximate Cost of the work:** Rs. 1,12,61,658.40 **Earnest Money:** Rs. 2,06,300.00 **Completion period of the work:** 6 Months **Maintenance Period:** 12 Months **Tender Notice No.:** 04-2026-SrDENS **Name of Work:** Construction of Retaining wall and side drain from km 587/900-589/460=1560m (UP side) between MR-SDB section of ADEN/KLBG sub division **Approximate Cost of the work:** Rs. 3,87,66,722.43 **Earnest Money:** Rs. 3,43,800.00 **Completion period of the work:** 12 Months **Maintenance Period:** 6 Months **Last date & Time of uploading quoted tender on www.ireps.gov.in website:** 09/03/2026 upto 15:00 hrs **Date & Time of Opening of tender on www.ireps.gov.in :** 09/03/2026 at 15:30 hrs The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. Website: **www.ireps.gov.in.** ANJ-15

TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING

Metro Railway, Kolkata

Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway for the following work: Name of work: Appointment of Authority Engineer for Providing project management services for "Design, Procurement & Construction of RCC Box Metro tunnel including Birati UG Station building & Subways (with Entry-Exit Structures) for two underground Metro Stations (Birati & Michael Nagar) by Cut & Cover Method (Top Down with Diaphragm Wall/Bottom Up Method with support arrangement) including architectural finishing, firefighting, water supply, sanitary installation, drainage & BLT works, E&M service, ECS Service, TVS Services, Power Supply System with 750V DC Traction System including composite Aluminium third Rail, from Ch: 6.250 Km to Ch: 9.840 Km including all ancillary works in connection with extension of Metro Railway from Noapara to Barasat via Bimanbandar-Tender No. EPC-2489-2024", **Approx. Cost of Work :** Rs.26,81,63,244. **Earnest Money:** Rs.14,90,800. **Completion Period:** 1820 Days, **Date and Time of Closing:** 17.03.2026 at 12:00 Hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website **www.ireps.gov.in** Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website.

Abridged e-Tender Notice No. : Civil-2548-2026 (Open)

Follow us at: /metrorailwaykol /metrorailkolkata

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar - 841221

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender No.: MROT-4-2025, Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/Maint, Rail Wheel Plant, Bela acting for and on behalf of President of India, invites Open e-tender through Indian Railways specialized tendering portal **www.ireps.gov.in** from reputed firms based on single packet system for the under mentioned work. **1. Name of work with its location and completion period : Name of Work:** Revamping of Support Structure of cope Holding Ovens-CHO (C-20 & C-21), Drag Holding Ovens-DHO (D-13 & D-14), Hot Wheel Slat Conveyor (03 nos.) and Sand Heater in Mould Room at RWP-Bela **Location:** RWP/Bela, **Completion Period:** 180 Days. **2. Approx. cost of the work :** ₹9676000.00, **3. Bid security to be Deposited:** ₹193500.00, **4. Tender closing date and time :** 11.03.2026 at 15:00 hrs., **5. Website particulars, Notice Board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. :** For full details and submission of bid tenderer/bidder may kindly visit Indian Railways specialized tendering Portal **www.ireps.gov.in**. The tenderer(s)/ bidder(s) are directed to remain connected with IREPS portal www.ireps.gov.in for updates including Addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation with respect to the above tender.

Dy. CME/Maintenance
Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
RWP/CPRO/ADVT/2025-26/109

जिला अभियंता का कार्यालय, जिला परिषद, खूँटी
(अभियंत्रण शाखा)
शुद्धि पत्र

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय द्वारा अति अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 18/2025–26 PR No- 372723 District (25-26)_D द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा में महत्वपूर्ण तिथियों को निम्न प्रकार से संशोधित किया जाता है:–

क्र.		पूर्व में प्रकाशित तिथि	संशोधित तिथि
1	वेबसाईट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय	16.02.2026 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक	17.0.2026 पूर्वाह्न 09:00 बजे तक।
2	वेबसाईट में निविदा डालने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	22.02.2026 अपराह्ण 05:00 बजे तक।	23.02.026 अपराह्ण 05:00 बजे तक।
3	ई– निविदा की परिमाण विपत्र एवं अग्रधन की राशि ऑनलाईन जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	22.02.2026 अपराह्ण 05:00 बजे तक।	23.02.026 अपराह्ण 05:00 बजे तक।
4	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	24.02.2026 अपराह्ण 01:00 बजे	25.02.2026 अपराह्ण 01:00 बजे

निविदा सूचना की शेष शर्तें पूर्ववत रहेंगे।

ह०/–
जिला अभियंता,
जिला परिषद, खूँटी

PR 373252 District (25-26)D

ई० प्रोक्यूरमेंट सेल
कार्यपालक अभियन्ता का कार्यालय भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमण्डल धनबाद

अति अल्पकालीन ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट नोटिस
ई–टेन्डर रेफरेन्स नं० 07/2025–26/EE/BCD/DHANBAD

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (रू० में)	अग्रधन की राशि (रू० में)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (रू० में)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
1	Renovation and New Construction Work for Girls High School, Gomoh, Dhanbad.	4,53,83,800.00	4,54,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
2	New Construction, Renovation Work in Utkramik Uchya Vidyalaya, Dumdumi under Topchanchi Block, Dhanbad.	4,56,15,700.00	4,57,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
3	Renovation and Construction Work for Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Baliapur, Dist. Dhanbad.	4,11,71,400.00	4,12,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
4	Construction and Renovation of Jharkhand Awasiya Balika Vidyalaya Purvi Tundi Dhanbad, Jharkhand	3,72,55,900.00	3,73,000.00	10,000.00	14 माह।
5	Construction and Renovation of KGBV Bagsuma, Govindpur, Dhanbad.	4,97,30,500.00	4,98,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
6	Construction and Renovation of Utkramit +2 High School Birajpur Govindpur, Dhanbad.	4,36,48,400.00	4,37,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
7	Construction and Renovation of N.N. High School Bagsuma, Dhanbad	4,99,83,200.00	5,00,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।
8	Construction of 100 Beded Hostel in Umme Salma Urdu Girls High School Firdos Nagar Alpsankhayak Girls Hostel at Topchanchi Dhanbad.	4,53,72000.00	4,54,000.00	10,000.00	15 माह।

1.	वेबसाईट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	:–	25.02.2026 11:00 बजे
2.	वेबसाईट में निविदा डालने की अन्तिम तिथि/समय	:–	12.03.2026 11:00 बजे
3.	निविदा प्रकाशित करने वाले कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता	:–	कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमण्डल, धनबाद।
4.	निविदा खोलने की तिथि/समय एवं स्थान	:–	13.03.2026 11:30 बजे नोडल पदाधिकारी, ई० प्रोक्यूरमेंट सेल, मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन निर्माण विभाग, झारखण्ड, राँची।
5.	प्रोक्योरमेन्ट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क संख्या	:–	9973309316
6.	ई–प्रोक्योरमेन्ट सेल का हेल्पलाईन संख्या	:–	7488650243
7.	परिमाण विपत्र की राशि घट–बढ़ सकती है तदनुसार अग्रधन की राशि देय होगी।		
8.	सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी एवं ई–गवर्नेस विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार के आदेश ज्ञापांक 120 दिनांक 03.10.2023 के द्वारा निर्गत SOP (मानक संचालन प्रक्रिया) एवं भवन निर्माण विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार के पत्रांक 2229 दिनांक 06.10.2023 के आलोक में निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि केवल Online Mode द्वारा स्वीकार्य होगी।		
9.	निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि का ई–भुगतान जिस खाता से किया जायेगा, SOP के तहत अग्रधन की राशि उसी खाते में वापसी होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो उसकी संपूर्ण जवाबदेही निविदादाता की होगी।		

अन्य किसी भी प्रकार के बदलाव की सूचना **http://jharkhandterders.gov.in** पर देखा जा सकता है।
Note :- UCAN Registration is mandatory for the Bidders

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमण्डल, धनबाद

PR 373215 Building(25-26)#D

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
('e' Tender Notice for the supply of Stores, No.EPS/122/2025)

PCMM/WCR on behalf of the President of India invites the following advertised tenders through E-procurement System. No manual/postal offers shall be entertained. Tenders can be accessed under the link website https:/ireps.gov.in" for details and for submission of Tender.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Short Description	Tendered Qty.	Due Date
1	20255022A	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of IP Based Video Surveillance System	1029 Set.	06/03/2026
2	81265152	STONE 10V STD 10.23ODX6.00IDX3.25	2160 Nos.	06/03/2026
3	30252015	Kit for Brake Gear Bushes	813 Set.	09/03/2026
4	8125WCRTP-07	Manufacture and supply of 10125 mm Curved Switches	448 Set.	10/03/2026
5	34253160	Paint Synthetic Enamel, Exterior Finishing Brushing Colour	138343 Litre.	09/04/2026

" For tenders with estimated value below Rs. 50 lakh, interested firms are advised to visit www.ireps.gov.in".

Sd./-
For Principal Chief Material Manager, West Central Railway, Jabalpur

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Room No. 718-A, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Filling up of the post of Secretary, Sports Authority of India (SAI) in the Pay Matrix (Level 14- Rs. 1,44,200-Rs. 2,18,200) on deputation basis.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports invites applications from eligible and willing officers for appointment to the post of **Secretary, Sports Authority of India (SAI),** an autonomous organization under the Department of Sports, on **Deputation Basis** in Pay Level-14 of the Pay Matrix (Rs. 1,44,200 - 2,18,200). The eligibility criteria, experience, and other conditions are as prescribed in the detailed vacancy circular dated 28.01.2026 available on the Ministry's website.

Applications in the prescribed proforma, duly forwarded through proper channel, along with complete and up-to-date APAR dossiers for the last five years, vigilance clearance, integrity certificate, cadre clearance, and statement of penalties (if any), must reach in the O/o Shri Yogesh Kumar, Under Secretary to the Govt. of India, **Room No. 718-A, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-01** within the stipulated time. Advance copies may be submitted; however, they will be considered only after receipt of the application through proper channel. The last date for receipt of applications is on or before **27th February, 2026.** For detailed eligibility conditions, prescribed application format, and other terms & conditions, applicants are advised to visit the official websites: **https://yas.gov.in** or **https://yas.gov.in/sites/default/files/Circular%20dated%2028.01.2026.pdf**

(Under Secretary to the Government of India)
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
New Delhi

CBC 47103/12/0020/2526

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, BCCC,
Shanthinagara Division, 9th Floor, PUB, Bengaluru-560001.

No. EE/SN/TEND/21/2025-26 Date: 17.02.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)
Two Cover System (Quality & Cost Based selection)
(Only through GoK KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Shanthinagar Division, BCCC, Bengaluru, on behalf the Commissioner, BCCC invites Bids from reputed consultants those who have similar type of work for Consultancy Services for Project Management (PMC) for the below works.

Sl.No.	Name of the Work
	PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE WORK OF COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS, DRAINS & FOOTPATH IN WARD MAIN ROADS AND CROSS ROADS & IN ARTERIAL, SUB-ARTERIAL, PRIORITY ROADS AND CONNECTING ROADS in the following wards.
1	Ward No. 111 (Shanthala nagara), 116 (Neelasandra) and 117 (Shanthinagara) of Shanthinagar Sub-division under "Chief Minister Infrastructure Development Programme" (CMIDP) Grants 2025-26 (GO No. 2, 3 & 4) (Package-1) Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 15.00 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 37,500/-.**
2	Ward No. 89 (Jogupalya) and 115 (Vannarpete) of Domlur Sub-division under "Chief Minister Infrastructure Development Programme" (CMIDP) Grants 2025-26 (GO No. 5 & 8) (Package-2) Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 10.00 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 25,000/-.**
3	Ward No. 112 (Domluru) and Ward No. 114 (Agaram) of Domlur Sub-division under "Chief Minister Infrastructure Development Programme" (CMIDP) Grants 2025-26 (GO No. 6 & 7) (Package-3) Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 10.00 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 25,000/-.**
4	in Shanthinagara Sub-division under "Capital Support for Special Infra Projects" Grants 2025-26 (GO No. 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30) (Package-1) Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 24.95 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 62,375/-.**
5	in Domlur Sub-division under "Capital Support for Special Infra Projects" Grants 2025-26 (GO No. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 & 43) (Package-2) Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 17.50 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 43,750/-.**
6	Ward No. 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171 and 172 in Shanthinagara Division - Call-2. Project Cost : **Rs. 10.00 Crores.** EMD: **Rs. 25,000/-.**

Period of completion : **Till completion of work.**

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in (2)** Date of Pre-bid meeting : **27.02.2026 at 3.30 pm. in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Central Zone-1, 18th Floor, PU Building, Bengaluru-560001 headed by Chief Engineer, Central Zone-1, BCCC. (3)** Last date & time for submission of tenders : **06.03.2026 upto 4.00 pm. (4)** Date of opening of technical bid : **07.03.2026 at 4.30 pm.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Shanthinagara Division, BCCC

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT DIVISION KOPPAL.
Phone No: 08539 – 222318 email : eepwdkpl2@gmail.com

IFT No. PWD:DK:TR:KW- 4:2025-26:4201 **Date: 18-02-2026**

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division Koppal invites tenders from the eligible tenderers as per standard bid documents KW-3&4 on **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Portal. Head of Account: 5054-04-337-0-01-154 MDR Improvements Plan / 2025-26 & KKRDB- Macro – Institutional General & TSP / 2024-25. Two cover Tender procedure as per Rule 28 of the KTPP Act shall be followed. For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours on **Phone No. 08539 – 222318** and all informations regarding tenders can be had from website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in 04 Works (Work Indent No: 31794, 32299, 32509 & 32698)** Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders **05-03-2026 Time 16.00,** Date and Time for opening of Technical Bid **06-03-2026 Time 16.30.** Date and Time for opening of Financial Bid **06-03-2026 Time 16.00** (Minimum & Estimate Maximum Amount **Rs. 312.26 Lakhs** & **Rs. 500.00 Lakhs** respectively. The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address, EMD, Date & Time for Pre-bid meeting, Tender Queries/Clarification & Other information as mentioned in KPPP Portal. Any changes either in tender date or any other condition tenderers can view in KPPP portal.

Sd/- EE PWD Division,Koppal.

DIPR/Koppal/687/DeshpandePublicity/2025-26

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPPP mode only)

KPTCL invites bids for the following works against Enquiry Numbers.

No: CEE/OPR/KLB/SEE (O)/AEE-2/2025-26/14422 Date: 17.02.2026

Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/2025-26/SS/ 110kV Kuditini Dtd : 20.02.2026 For Providing additional 1x10 MVA,110/11 kV Transformer at 110/11kV sub-station **Kuditini** in Ballari Taluk, Ballari Dist. including supply of equipments / materials, erection testing & commissioning **on PTK basis** (major materials such as Power Transformer, 11kV Switchgear will be supplied by KPTCL).

No: CEE/OPR/KLB/SEE(O)/AEE-5/2025-26/14490 Date: 18.02.2026

Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/2025-26/SS/Replacement of Habsikote Transformer. For Replacement of 2X10MVA, 110/11kV power transformer by 2X20MVA, 110/11kV power transformer at 110kV **Habsikote** sub-station in Humnabad Taluk, Bidar District **on Partial Turnkey Basis,** including Supply of all Materials/Equipments (Excluding supply 20 MVA power transformer & 11kV MCVCB switchgears) and Erection (including dismantling & Civil Works) of all Materials/Equipments, Testing and Commissioning. Amount put to tender **Rs. 1,22,19,147/-.**

For more information log on to KPTCL website: **www.kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" on or after **20.02.2026** or directly on procurement website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Ele), Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavan, Sedam Road, Kalaburagi-585 105.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT MANGALURU DIVISION MANGALURU

Ref :PWD:MD:TND:(49E/46E): 2025-26:JE-2 **Dated: 17.02.2026**

SHORTERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Karnataka Public E-Procurement Portal) / Extension

The Executive Engineer, PWD, Division. Mangaluru Inviting Tender under K.P.P Portal **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from eligible Tenderers in accordance with KTPP Act Indent No. 33452 **under the Head of Account CMIDP. The Last date for reciept of tender to 25.02.2026 upto 17.00 Hours.**

Indent No. 32076, 32074, 32070, 32069, 32068, 32067, 32066, 32063 **under the Head of Account CMIDP. The Last date for reciept of tender extended to 25.02.2026 upto 17.00 Hours.**

In the above work lowest cost of estimate is Rs.50.00 Lakhs & highest cost of estimate is Rs. 200.00 Lakhs. Tenders for the above works are invited as per the Standard Tender Document KW-2 & KW-4. Further details such as value of work, amount put to tender, EMD etc., can be accessed on the KPP Portal at **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Further, for more details can contact O/o, Case Worker, Executive Engineer's Office, PWD, Mangaluru Division, Mangaluru during official working hours. Contact No: 0824-2423169.

DIPR/DK/KSMCA/1611/25-26 dt.18.02.2026 **Sd/- Executive Engineer**

Chamarajanagara Dist. Co-Operative Milk Union Ltd.,
Kuderu Village & Post, Santhemarahalli Hobali, Chamarajanagara - 571 316
Phone No. :08226-234848, E-mail: enggchamul@gmail.com

No: CHAMUL/ENGG/M(E)/Architects Empanelment/2025-26/Call-2 Date:18.02.2026

RE-TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR EMPANELMENT OF ARCHITECTS FOR A PERIOD OF 2 YEARS (THROUGH KPPP PORTAL)

- Chamarajanagar Co-operative Milk Union Ltd.(CHAMUL) Chamarajanagar, is contemplating to build Civil Structures for the establishment of Ice - cream plant, Camp offices, ETP, roads and pavements and other developmental works in next 2 years. The Union intends to hire the services of reputed competent 'Architects' for planning, economical designing, and regular/periodical inspection of the proposed projects.
- In the event of exigencies CHAMUL reserves its right to obtain Architect services from any Architect other than the architects who will not be a part of the panel of architects also. CHAMUL reserves the right to accept or reject the applications without assigning any reason thereof.
- Interested reputed 'Architects' who have handled at least three Dairy plants/LMP with products plant/ice cream plants, Civil works of an outlay of (Minimum) Rs. 20.00 Crores each in the past ten years and Architects having registered office in the vicinity of 200 kms may participate in the tender through KPP Portal under the existing system (Technical & Financial). Interested Architects may submit their tender through web site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from : **19.02.2026**
2. Last date and time for Tender submission : **02.03.2026 up to 2:00 PM**
3. Tender [Part 1] will be opened on : **03.03.2026 at 02:05 PM**

For More information Please Contact Manager(Engg), **Mob No.8867915047** During Working Hours.

For Chamarajanagar Dist. Co-operative Milk Producers Societies Union Ltd.,
Sd/- Managing Director

ತೋಟಗಾರಿಕೆ ಇಲಾಖೆ

ತೋಟಗಾರಿಕೆ ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಮಾವು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ & ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆ ಪ್ರಾತ್ಯಕ್ಷಿಕ ಘಟಕ, ಕುಂಬಾಪೂರ ತೋಟಗಾರಿಕೆ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ. ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ : pocoevegdwd@yahoo.in

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : K.S.M.D. & M.C.L./MD/D.D.H./DWD-01/2025-26
ದಿನಾಂಕ : 16–02–2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

2025–26 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ತರಕಾರಿ ಬೆಳೆಗಳ ಉತ್ಕೃಷ್ಟ ಕೇಂದ್ರ, ಕುಂಬಾಪುರ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ, ಧಾರವಾಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾವು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೂಲ ಉಪಕರಣ ತಯಾರಕರಿಂದ **(Original Equipment Manufacturers) Mango Primary and Secondary Processing Facility (Handling Facility With Hot Water Treatment, Grading, Sorting & Packaging Units)** ಘಟಕ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕಾರ್ಯಗತಗೊಳಿಸುವಿಕೆಗಾಗಿ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವೇದಿಕೆಯ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲು ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊರಡಿಸುವ ಕುರಿತು.

1) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ ಒಟ್ಟು ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ : ರೂ. 202.30 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು, 2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಫಾರ್ಮ್ ಬೆಲೆ : ಇ–ಅಡಳಿತದನ್ವಯ, 3) ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಕ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 17–02–2026 ರ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ 10.00 ಗಂಟೆಯಿಂದ, 4) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 26–02–2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, 5) ಪ್ರೀ–ಬಿಡ್ ಸಭೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ : 23–02–2026, 6) ಇ–ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣ ವೇದಿಕೆಯ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 27–02–2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ, 7) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಮೋದನೆಗೊಂಡ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ಡು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 02–03–2026 ರ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ, 8) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನೊಂದಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಮೊತ್ತ : ರೂ. 3,03,450/– (ರೂ. ಮೂರು ಲಕ್ಷದ ಮೂರು ಸಾವಿರದ ನಾಲ್ಕುನೂರಾ ಐವತ್ತು ಮಾತ್ರ), 9) ವ್ಯವಹರಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿಳಾಸ, ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಯೋಜನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು (ತೋಟಗಾರಿಕೆ ಉಪ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು) ತರಕಾರಿ ಬೆಳೆಗಳ ಉತ್ಕೃಷ್ಟ ಕೇಂದ್ರ, ಕುಂಬಾಪುರ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ, ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : 97397 00181.

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಈ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ತೋಟಗಾರಿಕೆ ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು,
ಮಾವು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ & ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆ ಪ್ರಾತ್ಯಕ್ಷಿಕ ಘಟಕ,
ಕುಂಬಾಪೂರ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ.

ಡಿಐಪಿಆರ್/ಧಾರವಾಡ/1251/ಮಣಿಪಾಲ್/2025–26

TRAUMA AND EMERGENCY CARE CENTRE
BANGALORE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(An Autonomous Institute of Govt. of Karnataka)
Office of the Special Officer, Victoria Hospital Campus, K.R. Road, Bengaluru - 560002. Telephone: 080-26802725, E-mail: sploffrtcc@gmail.com

No: TCC/Tender/P-Notification/01/2025-26 **Dated: 17-02-2026**

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Short term E-Tender are invited through KPP Portal for **Outsource Services for BMCRI Trauma & Emergency Care Center, Bengaluru.**

Sl. No.	Tender Notification No.	Details
1	DME/2025-26/SE0669	E-Tender for Providing Housekeeping Services
2	DME/2025-26/SE0670	E-Tender for Providing Wardboy Services
3	DME/2025-26/SE0671	E-Tender for Providing Security Services
4	DME/2025-26/SE0672	E-Tender for Providing Operation & Maintenance Services

1) Commencement date for Uploading of E-Tenders: **17-02-2026. 2)** Last Date for E-Tenders Queries: **24-02-2026. 3)** Date of E-Tender Pre Bid Meeting: **24-02-2026 at 3.00 PM. 4)** Last Date for Uploading the E-Tenders: **04-03-2026 upto 5.00 PM. 5)** Date of Opening of E-Tender Technical Bid: **06-03-2026 at 11.00 AM.**

Tender details can be viewed, downloaded and applied only through the KPPP mode only. Website: **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact **Special Officer, BMCRI Trauma and Emergency Care Center, Victoria Hospital Campus, K.R. Road, Bengaluru.** Phone: **080-26802725,** E-mail: **sploffrtcc@gmail.com,** Website: **https://teccbmcri.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Special Officer,
BMCRI, Trauma & Emergency Care Center,
Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/5709/Adverto/2025-26

Supreme Court: Identifying crime victims by race or region 'regressive'

Court disposes of plea in Tripura student's killing

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said that identifying victims of crime on the basis of race, region, sex or caste would amount to treading a regressive path. It was hearing a plea related to the 2025 killing of Anjel Chakma from Tripura, who was allegedly targeted in a racial attack in Uttarakhand's Dehradun.

A bench said such issues ought to be placed before the competent authority through the Attorney General.

Petitioner Anoop Prakash Awasthi, a Delhi-based lawyer, argued that the matter had been raised in Parliament, but lawmakers declined to establish any agency dedicated to addressing hate crimes.

The bench, however, said, "A crime is a crime, and it must be dealt with an iron hand."

The petitioner sought directions for the creation of a nodal agency in each state to address grievances regarding identity-based discrimination.

In response, the bench pointed out that such a mechanism could risk encouraging further divisions.

"The moment we start entertaining litigations where victims are unfortunately targeted because of their region, the negative message will be that people begin identifying others as Keralite, Tamilian, Kashmiri... We are not meant to do so. We have a strong federal structure, and we are supposed to grow stronger through unity, not by being divided into regions," the SC said.

The petitioner submitted that the new criminal laws contain no special provision to deal with such cases.

To this, the court said that it was probably not done, keeping in mind the "negative consequences of such a provision".

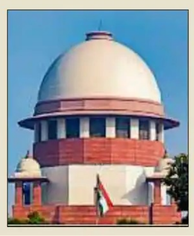
The court finally disposed of the plea, granting liberty to the petitioner to submit a soft copy of the petition, along with a copy of the order, to the office of the Attorney General for necessary action.

The plea had been filed in December 2025 following the brutal killing of a 24-year-old MBA student from Tripura, who succumbed to injuries sustained in a racially motivated attack in Dehradun.

Chakma had moved to Dehradun after completing his schooling at Holy Cross School, Agartala, to pursue an MBA. He was stabbed to death in the presence of his younger brother, Michael.

REGIONAL DIVISIONS

- SC warns against identity-based victim categorisation
- Plea linked to 2025 killing of Tripura student in Dehradun
- Court says, "A crime is a crime, must be dealt with an iron hand"
- Cautions mechanism may deepen regional divisions



SC to hold final hearing on pleas against Places of Worship Act

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Wednesday decided to consider for final hearing a batch of petitions, including one by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, challenging the validity of certain provisions of a 1991 law which prohibited the filing of a suit to reclaim a place of worship or seek a change in its character from what prevailed on August 15, 1947.

Upadhyay claimed that the Act bars judicial remedies to reclaim religious sites and takes away the right of judicial review.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi agreed that the matter has been pending for a long time and the court will list it for final hearing.

The court, however, refused to consider a plea that a civil court at Rajasthan should be restrained from passing effective orders in the Ajmer dargah case.

"If they pass such orders, we will see what's to be done. We have passed an order, and that is binding on all and one. If someone passes an order in defiance of that, then we have to examine that and see, consequences will follow," the bench said.

The Union government is yet to file a response in the matter.

Sports infra, tourism key in Rs 4L crore Gujarat budget

AHMEDABAD, DHNS: The Gujarat government on Wednesday tabled its budget for the financial year 2026-27 with an outlay of over Rs 4 lakh crore, an overall increase of 10.2% compared to the previous budget.

Some of the highlights of the budget were allocation of funds for creating sports infrastructure to create an 'Olympic-ready Ahmedabad', promoting tourism in the state and launching the 'Wed in Gujarat' campaign, besides a Rs 100 crore fund for Namo central library in Gandhinagar.

The state government announced an allocation of Rs 1331 crore for the sports sector, a majority of which will be spent on improving sports facilities in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts. It also made a provision of Rs 500 crore for transforming Ahmedabad into an 'Olympic-ready city'.

Separate funds have been allocated for the development of "world-class sporting infrastructure" in preparation for the Commonwealth Games 2030 and the Olympics 2036.

DGCA proposes 30-day flying ban for unruly passengers

NEW DELHI, PTI: Aviation watchdog DGCA has proposed stricter norms to deal with unruly passengers, including allowing airlines to directly impose a flying ban on such passengers for up to 30 days.

"A 'No/ Zero Tolerance Policy' has been adopted to ensure the safety of the aircraft/persons/property and to maintain good order & discipline on board an aircraft," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in its draft revised rules.

Among other proposals, the regulator has mentioned that an airline shall formulate and implement a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the handling of unruly passengers and for reporting the incidents to the DGCA.

Maha govt revokes 5% quota for Muslims

Opposition terms move 'anti-minority'

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

The Maharashtra government has withdrawn the 5% reservation for Muslims in jobs and education, drawing sharp criticism from the Opposition, which accused the Mahayuti administration of being "anti-minority."

A Government Resolution (GR) was issued to this effect on Tuesday, as the previous ordinance about the 5% reservation has lapsed, and there is an interim court stay on that decision.

The Congress-NCP government had issued an ordinance in 2014 to grant a 16% quota to Marathas and 5% to Muslims.

As per the new GR, issued by the Social Justice Department, all previous decisions and the ordinance related to the 5% reservation in government, semi-government jobs, and educational institutions for the socially and educationally backward Muslim group included under the Special Backward Category (A) have been cancelled.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has so far not commented on the development.

Oppn slams govt

The Congress led the Opposition's attack, with former minister Naseem Khan accusing the BJP government of being anti-minority.

"This decision amounts to grave injustice. By cancelling the reservation, the BJP government has prevented minorities from joining the mainstream of development. This once again exposes its anti-backward class and anti-minority mindset," said Khan.

Mumbai Congress president and MP Varsha Gaikwad termed the decision "extremely unfortunate", saying the February 17 GR revoked all earlier provisions related to caste and validity certificates under the SBC-A category.

NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule questioned the withdrawal. "Reservation is a constitutional right. Why has the government taken it away?" she asked.

AIMIM leader Imtiyaz Jaleel described the decision as a "Ramadan gift" to Muslims, adding that the quota had been introduced after courts noted high dropout rates among Muslim students.

Officer transferred

Meanwhile, the state government has stayed minority status granted to 75 schools between January 28 and 30 and transferred Deputy Secretary Milind Padmanabh Shenoy of the Minority Development Department, who had digitally signed the certificates.

Legal hurdle

The ordinance had faced legal challenges, and in November 2014, the Bombay High Court stayed its implementation. As it was not passed into law by the legislature by December 23, 2014, it lapsed automatically. Subsequently, the Supreme Court invalidated the reservation while hearing a special leave petition against the high court's order.

Galgotias University told to vacate AI Summit expo after robodog row

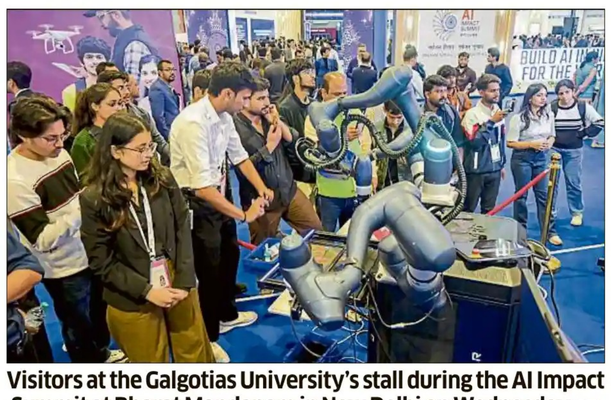
AJITH ATHRADY & SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Noida-based Galgotias University was on Wednesday asked to leave the expo associated with the 'India AI Impact Summit' after it came under fire for displaying a Chinese-made robodog as its own.

The incident also triggered backlash from the Opposition and caused embarrassment for the government.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi took to X, saying, "Instead of leveraging India's talent and data, the AI summit is a disorganised PR spectacle — Indian data up for sale, Chinese products showcased," even as government sources said the university was asked to vacate "immediately".

Adding to the controversy, the Youth Congress claimed on X that the private university also displayed the 'Striker V3 ARF from South Korea' as its own Drone Soccer system, which it said was "built from scratch on campus".



Visitors at the Galgotias University's stall during the AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Although university representatives initially claimed they had received no intimation to vacate, authorities cut the power supply to the pavilion, forcing them to leave.

Galgotias University faced online backlash on Tuesday for showcasing a robotic dog labelled 'Orion' at the AI Summit expo, even as it emerged that the device was the Chinese-made 'Unitree Go2'. The university had also made headlines for the wrong reasons during the Lok Sabha polls, when its students — purportedly at the behest of varsity authorities — protested at the Congress headquarters.

As the controversy intensified, Prof Neha Singh of the university said on Wednesday that she took responsibility, acknowledging that she might not have communicated properly.

"As it was done with a lot of energy and enthusiasm and very quickly, I may not have come across as eloquently as I usually do. Also, the intent may not have been properly understood. One important point concerns the robot dog — we cannot claim that we manufactured it," she said.

However, in a statement, the university "profusely" apologised for the confusion and squarely blamed the episode on an "ill-informed" Singh, who was "not aware of the technical origins of the product" and, "in her enthusiasm to be on camera, gave factually incorrect information even though she was not authorised to speak to the press".

On its official X handle, the Congress alleged that the Modi government had made a "laughing stock of India globally" in relation to AI.

It said Chinese robots were being displayed as indigenous innovations and claimed Chinese media had mocked India, calling the episode "truly embarrassing".

S KRISHNAN
IT Secretary

"If you mislead... we do not want a controversy (and) so we do not want a controversial agency... whom people believe are exhibiting something which is not theirs.

Two arrested for stealing wearable devices at AI summit

NEW DELHI, PTI: Two contractual employees have been arrested for allegedly stealing wearable devices belonging to a Bengaluru-based startup from the AI Impact Summit venue at Bharat Mandapam, police sources said on Wednesday.

According to a source, the accused have been identified as Manish Nagar and Ashish Mahariya, who were hired on a contractual basis to carry out videography work. "Duo picked up some devices from the venue, mistaking them for pen drives and believing they could be of personal use. The stolen devices have been recovered."

The arrests came a day after an FIR was registered following a complaint by NeoSapien CEO Dhananjay Yadav, who alleged that his AI-based wearable device had gone missing during the summit.

RSS does not control BJP: Bhagwat

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday said that the RSS did not "remote-control" the BJP, but those who opposed the BJP also opposed the RSS.

Speaking at a function here, Bhagwat said Sangh Swayamsevaks do join the BJP and occupy important positions there, but it was incorrect to say that the RSS "controls" the BJP.

Mohan Bhagwat

Referring to the tariffs imposed by the US, he said that it wanted to force India to bend down using its economic might and military power, but India was a strong country and didn't acquiesce.

On freeing Hindu temples from government control, he said the issue was how to look after the temples. "Saints should ponder over how to look after temples," he said.

Bhagwat also met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. They discussed issues pertaining to the Assembly polls, slated for next year.

Earlier, NSUI workers raised slogans against the RSS chief when he visited Lucknow University to take part in an event there. The students said efforts were being made to "saffronise" the country's educational institutions.

The cops detained several students after they tried to break the police cordon.

Bhagwat, who was on a two-day visit to the state capital, took part in several events attended by members of various organisations and answered their questions, pertaining mainly to social issues.

'Spreading fundamentalism': RSS chief hits out at US, China

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday took a swipe at the US and China, alleging that they tend to "finish those who come in their way" and asserting that India has the solutions to many of the challenges confronting the world, reports PTI.

Addressing an event at Lucknow University, the RSS chief said, "Western countries spread fundamentalism. Their thinking is to become powerful, live on their own, and abandon the rest, eliminating those who become obstacles. This is what America and China are doing today."

He asserted that solutions to global problems lie in India. "Today, India has the answers to the problems facing the world. If we want to become a world leader, we must become powerful in all areas. The world only believes it when truth is backed by power," he said.

CRPF sets up 43 surveillance posts above 6,000 feet in J&K

NEW DELHI, PTI: The CRPF has created 43 temporary operating bases in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack to search and eliminate terrorists who stay at high altitudes, security officials said on Wednesday.

These bases, established above the height of 6,000 feet, are used to house the troops of the central paramilitary force for a few days and launch search and assault operations in the heights where terrorists are holed up in the 'dhoks' (mud and stone huts).

A total of 43 temporary operating bases have been created till now after the first was created in July 2025. Out of these, 26 such bases have been created in the Kashmir region while the rest 17 are in the Jammu area, the sources said.

Each temporary operating base houses about 16-25 troops apart from some personnel of the local police, they said.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and other security forces used one such temporary operating base to eliminate in July the three terrorists who were responsible for the Pahalgam attack. This operation was called 'Operation Mahadev'.

India eases curbs on Chinese imports for power, coal: Sources

NEW DELHI, REUTERS: India has begun easing restrictions on Chinese equipment, put in place after a deadly 2020 border clash, letting state-run power and coal firms start limited imports amid shortages and project delays, two government officials told Reuters.

This is the first significant easing of the curbs that largely shut Chinese firms out of India's $700-750 billion government contract market.

Reuters reported in January that India was examining broader relaxations on Chinese bidders for government contracts.

Since the 2020 clash, New Delhi has required Chinese bidders to register with a government panel and secure political and security clearances before competing for any state contract. India has now allowed state-run entities to procure a power-transmission component from China without government approval. It is weighing a similar, time-bound exemption for key coal-sector equipment, said the two officials.

The exemption was granted in the "national interest", as blocking Chinese imports would hurt India's manufacturing capability, said one of the officials. A panel of top bureaucrats has approved the waiver, with a formal order expected soon, said the two sources.

The easing follows repeated requests from government departments facing shortages and project delays under the 2020 restrictions, said both officials. India may allow case-by-case imports of critical Chinese equipment rather than fully reopen procurement, they said.

Since the border standoff, strained India-China ties have slowed the exchange of capital, technology and talent. New project awards to Chinese bidders fell 27% to $1.67 billion in 2021 from a year earlier.

India aims to add 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030, but is hobbled by execution delays and transmission bottlenecks.

Navy's Dhruv choppers return to skies

KALYAN RAY
VISAKHAPATNAM, DHNS

After remaining grounded for more than a year, the Indian Navy's Dhruv Advanced Lightweight Helicopters (ALH) are finally flying again, with five of them appearing on Wednesday at the International Fleet Review (IFR) in Visakhapatnam, witnessed by President Droupadi Murmu.

The permission received by the navy came with conditions. The force would fly an ALH for 100 hours at a stretch, after which the aircraft must undergo a thorough check before being allowed to fly again, sources said.

Not all 24 ALHs have been cleared to fly, as it has been decided to raise the number progressively. The indigenous helicopters have been operational again for the past couple of weeks, providing relief to the navy, which faces a shortage of choppers.

All ALHs flown by the armed forces were grounded in January 2025 following two back-to-back fatal crashes involving Dhruv helicopters of the Indian Coast Guard, killing six.

Aircraft during the International Fleet Review at Visakhapatnam. PTI

After last year's Pahalgam attack, the Centre allowed the Indian Army and IAF to resume the ALH flights, but the navy and coast guard choppers remained grounded.

At the IFR, two ALHs performed a search and rescue operation while three others flew in a formation during the fly-past.

The IFR saw participation from 85 ships, including 19 foreign warships from 18 nations, reflecting the scale and diversity of maritime participation.

The third International Fleet Review hosted by the Indian Navy is taking place 10 years after the previous one. It is also India's largest international fleet review, a ceremonial gathering of naval delegations, ships, submarines and aircraft from foreign countries.

The Indian fleet included 60 ships of the Indian Navy, four Indian Coast Guard vessels, and one ship each from the Shipping Corporation of India and the National Institute of Ocean Technology.

The review featured three Indian submarines, one French Atlantique maritime plane and two P8I patrol aircraft from India and the USA, and participation by over 60 aircraft, underscoring the multi-domain operational capability and the coordinated maritime presence on display.

India's latest Kalvari-class submarines, however, were not a part of the show. There were no US ships in the review, but the other two Quad members, Australia and Japan, sent their warships. A Russian ship was also a part of the review.

The participating foreign countries were Seychelles, Indonesia, the Maldives, Thailand, Oman, Iran, South Korea, Australia, Japan, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, UAE, Malaysia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Russia and Sri Lanka.

This is likely the first official participation of Bangladesh in an event in India since the new government assumed office in Dhaka.

Top officials from Bangladesh will also be present at the Goa Maritime Conclave on February 21.

In its biggest order, ED attaches assets worth over Rs 10k crore

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has issued its biggest-ever single attachment order clamping down on 247 immovable assets worth more than Rs 10,000 crore as part of its money laundering investigation against Chandigarh-based PACL (Pearls Group).

The group is accused of orchestrating a Rs 48,000-crore Ponzi scheme.

The properties that have been attached provisionally under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) are located in SAS Nagar (Mohali), Rupnagar and Zirakpur in Punjab, the federal probe agency said in a statement. The attached 247 properties have been identified as having been acquired from investor funds, constituting proceeds of crime. They have been valued at Rs 10,021.46 crore, it said.

This is probably the highest single attachment order in terms of value and number of properties issued by the agency, ED officials said.

There have been instances when more assets with higher value have been attached in money laundering cases, but they are linked instances and not a single case, they said.

The ED probe stems from a February 2014 CBI case against PACL Ltd, its late promoter Nirmal Singh Bhangoo and some others. Bhangoo died in August 2024.

Investment scheme

The accused entities and individuals of PACL operated an "illegal" collective investment scheme, fraudulently mobilising more than Rs 48,000 crore from lakhs of investors across India under the guise of sale and development of agricultural land, according to the ED.

Investors were induced to invest through cash down payment and instalment payment plans and were made to sign "misleading" documents, including agreements, powers of attorney and other instruments, it said. "In the majority of cases, no land was ever delivered, and approximately Rs 48,000 crore remains unpaid to investors," the agency said.

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

Dam safety: Time for a nationwide audit

When Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah recently raised the alarm on dam safety, he was not just flagging an engineering concern. He was reframing the issue as one of national security, federal responsibility, and public trust. Speaking at the International Conference on Dam Safety (ICDS) in Bengaluru, the Chief Minister placed ageing dams at the centre of India's infrastructure risk debate. The numbers justify the concern. According to a UN report, India has over 6,600 specified dams, making it the world's third-largest dam-owning nation. Of these, about 1,100 are already over 50 years old, and more than 220 have crossed the 100-year mark. By 2050, nearly 80% of India's large dams will be past their intended design life. Karnataka alone has 231 specified dams. Nearly 70% of them are over 25 years old, while over 40 major structures are already past the 50-year threshold. Icons such as Vani Vilasa Sagar (119 years), Krishna Raja Sagar (95 years), and Tungabhadra (73 years) underline both the state's engineering legacy and its present vulnerability.

The dams face four interlinked dangers. First, structural fatigue and ageing of mechanical systems such as gates and hoists, many of which were designed for a 50-year life. This risk was starkly illustrated in 2024 at the Tungabhadra Dam, where a crest gate was washed away after a chain link snapped. Second, reservoir sedimentation has robbed older dams of significant storage capacity, reducing their ability to manage floods or droughts. Third, climate variability, where extreme rainfall routinely exceeds the assumptions under which these dams were originally designed. Fourth, a more contemporary risk of cybersecurity, where as dams adopt digital controls and automated gates, they become potential targets for technological sabotage. The Chief Minister's emphasis on cooperative federalism was equally pointed – he called for shared safety standards across river basins. This was coupled with a push to replace episodic, manual inspections with continuous digital monitoring, including real-time dashboards, remote sensing, and structural health systems.

Cooperative federalism must steer monitoring and modernisation efforts to secure India's ageing dams

Systematic monitoring, scheduled modernisation, climate-resilient redesign, and credible emergency action plans for downstream communities should be non-negotiable. This must begin with a nationwide audit of all specified dams without waiting for a catastrophe. This necessitates that the Centre and states act as partners, moving beyond jurisdiction-based friction to embrace a model of cooperative federalism where safety standards are unified across river basins. Dams were once called the temples of modern India. As they age, maintaining them safely is no longer just about irrigation or power, but also about safeguarding lives and livelihoods.

Another thrust to the urban engine

The Rs-1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF), approved by the Union cabinet last week, is yet another attempt to address India's rising urban development challenges. While it is claimed that India lives in its villages, urbanisation remains the idiom of development and, often, its driving force. Cities are growing, and new urban centres are evolving with increasing migration from villages and the shift of economic forces. These urban centres should act as engines of development, but are weighed down by structural inadequacies. The new programme, which was announced in the 2025-26 budget, envisages an urban transformation within the next five years with projects to be funded by multiple sources. The Centre will provide 25% of a project's cost if the city raises at least 50% of the funding from the market through municipal bonds, bank loans, and public-private partnerships. The remaining 25% can be raised by states or local bodies.

Ambitious urban development programmes have been conceived and implemented in the past without remarkable results. The 2026-27 budget has reduced the allocation for AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) by 20%. The Smart Cities Plan, with an estimated expenditure of Rs 1.64 lakh crore till 2025, covering 100 cities, fell short of its goals. Its failures should inform the new programme. The government has pitched the UCF as a shift in the country's urban development approach – from grant-based financing to market-linked, reform-driven, and outcome-oriented infrastructure creation. It aims to involve market finance and private participation for the delivery of high-quality infrastructure and build resilient, productive, inclusive, and climate-responsive cities.

The Urban Challenge Fund envisions big-ticket reform. Local implementation could be a weak link

These are major goals which should translate into workable plans to provide essential needs such as livelihood, water, health, education, and affordable transport. The challenge is to turn the country's urban centres into liveable entities. It must be noted that the government has, in the past, made grand-scale announcements without efficient follow-through. Dysfunctional local self-government bodies add a layer of complexity. Who will implement the plans? Top-down initiatives, especially the ones that involve spending large sums of money, have had modest success rates. While the central assistance is worth Rs 1 lakh crore, the total investment in the UCF is expected to be Rs 4 lakh crore over the next five years. The vision is to cover all cities with a population of 10 lakh and more. It is an experiment with inherent challenges – the biggest being political interference and corruption, a given in programmes involving big money.

TRADE AND TRADE-OFF

India's strategic autonomy on trial

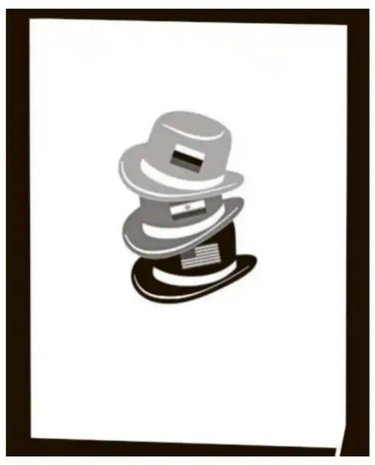
US assertions push India into friendship tests, placing its established relations with other powers on shaky ground

PRASENJIT CHOWDHURY

At a time when there is a perceived sense of slight about Washington's assertions that New Delhi has committed to reducing Russian oil imports in a lopsided trade deal, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar affirmed that India's decisions on energy purchases will be made after considering "availability, cost and risks". Strategic autonomy is a non-negotiable condition for the availability of strategic options in the interaction of states, and for India to conduct its international diplomatic negotiations, it needs to blend high-mindedness with toughness. Jaishankar is surely aware that the size of the economy, position in trade and technological networks, savings, wealth, and finance are the main sources of economic power, and their impact on strategic autonomy is considerable.

Part of the impression accounting for the sense of India's capitulation to the US must be due to the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi's allegation in the Lok Sabha that the NDA government had compromised India's energy security, data, and the future of its farmers by signing the Indo-US interim trade agreement. Going by Trump badmouthing India for the last couple of months and his disparaging tone vis-à-vis India's stony silence and refusal to counter Trump further firmed up a perception of India's tame gesture. Russian President Vladimir Putin told Washington last year not to try to strong-arm India and China with tariffs and sanctions, saying, "You cannot talk to India or China in that way." Addressing the media after attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, Putin accused the Trump administration of using economic pressure as a tool to undermine two of Asia's biggest powers. We would have loved our PM saying to Trump that when it comes to the energy security of a nation, India, like the US, must brook no nonsense.

Whether the core goals of Indian exceptionalism and prickly sovereignty of its global vision had been sustained was on trial during the US-India negotiations on the 2008 nuclear agreement and in some features of US-India defence sales. But this time, it is a bit hazy. Trump announced that a trade deal had been reached with India, claiming that New Delhi would stop buying Russian oil as part of the agreement. No comment from India has been forthcoming, and Russia said it has received no word from New Delhi about halting oil purchases. "We respect bilateral US-Indian relations," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, "But we attach no less importance to the development of an advanced strategic partnership between Russia and India". Analysts are, however, wary that India will stop buying Russian oil completely due to the economic ramifications. As both the US and Russia consider India to be their natural ally, it would be unfortunate if India acts on American diktats.



The ironic part is that strategic autonomy is the intellectual descendant of non-alignment, as Nehru's signature concept of Indian foreign policy draws on the drive to maintain Indian primacy in South Asia, envisioning a unique India that regards the nation primarily as the heir to a great civilisation. The drive to make India's economy a real source of power has become a core foreign policy objective since 1990. The assertions from Washington that India committed to reducing oil imports (like Trump's repeated assertion that he stopped a nuclear war from breaking out between India and Pakistan) from Russia sound audacious without a refutation from New Delhi, and the deliberate obfuscation about the Indo-US trade deal.

Alliance without alignment

India's vote against the resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) condemning Iran for its 'violent' crackdown on peaceful protests and extending investigative mandates to probe the alleged violations must be read in the light of the US flexing its muscles in subverting India's interests both in the cases of its relation to Russia and Iran, India's need to not antagonise its Muslim population and its expediency to maintain its interests in the Chabahar port, and a slew of other factors. The US revoked the long-standing sanctions waiver for Chabahar in September 2025, which exposed Indian operators to potential penalties. The US is trying to drag India into a test of friendship that overlooks the nuances of an established relationship.

India's thriving bilateral relationships with Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia – each having adversarial relations with the other – are essentially independent and non-parallel. India's dealings with the countries locked in outstanding disputes have been the hallmark of its foreign policy behaviour since independence. For instance, since the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv in 1992, India has sought to compartmentalise its ties with Israel and Iran, driven by an intent to pursue bilateral relations consistent with its interests and requirements, regardless of their conflicts. To make strategic autonomy work, India has, in the past, been able to muster a sophisticated and complex set of bilateral and multilateral relations.

It bears recall that since the late 1990s, there has been frequent speculation about the formation of a trilateral alliance consisting of Russia, China, and India, which, by the imperative of strategic autonomy, was a no-brainer mainly because the relationship of each of them with the US is more important than their relationship with each other. The American flair for unilateralism and interference in the internal affairs of other countries stands not only in violation of international law but also in the diktats of strategic autonomy. If the past is any guide, technology denial, sanctions, and arm-twisting continued to haunt India as far as the US is concerned, while Russia, on the other hand, had been consistently hospitable to Indian requirements. Energy and defence had been the bane of Indo-Russian ties even before the Ukraine war. The cold logic of the 21st-century global politics is to wear several hats.

(The writer is a Kolkata-based commentator on geopolitics, development and culture)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Between chemistry and Mr Darcy

The library remained my refuge; the allure of books never faded

RUCHI SHARMA

A library is a temple of learning—a hallowed place where true learning unfolds, so my father would say. My love for reading began in early childhood, when my parents read storybooks aloud to us. Every night, we entered a fairyland – a world of kings and queens, princes and princesses, enchantresses and witches, elves, goblins, pixies and the ever-so-vile stepmothers.

In primary school, we discovered the *Panchatantra* and *Jataka* tales, each story carrying a gentle moral message. We listened to the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* with rapt attention. These epics extolled virtues of goodness, integrity, honesty, righteousness, morality and honour—virtues that quietly shaped us.

As we climbed up the educational ladder, we gained access to a larger library—a treasure trove of novels, newspapers, comics, encyclopedias and children's magazines. What caught my attention was Robert Ripley's *Believe It or Not!* digests, whose astonishing facts were mindboggling and incredible. The tongue-in-cheek humour of *Dennis the Menace* delighted me, as did the *Adventures of Tintin* and Captain Haddock created by Belgian cartoonist Hergé.

Libraries are meant to be sacrosanct, with noise kept to a minimum. Ours, however, did not strictly follow convention. Though a sign proclaimed 'Silence is Golden', it was rarely observed. There would be a cacophony. The room buzzed with chatter as children learnt through interactions, discussions and shared discovery. Steel cupboards stood unlocked, inviting free access to books and curiosity.

When I entered the Senior Wing, the romance of books deepened. As I stepped into adolescence, stories that titillated me enticed me. In fact, one day, I was caught reading *Pride and Prejudice* in the chemistry class. I had kept the book under my desk. I was enamoured by the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy and could not peel away my attention.

In college we studied *Wuthering Heights*. It was no simple romance, but rather a dark gothic version of it that shook me. From the college library, I borrowed *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot. The enduring love between the brother and sister, who could not be parted in death, touched me to the core.

When I became an English teacher, the library remained my refuge. It was where I set question papers, searching for passages that were informative and meaningful and, at the same time, tested my students' reading comprehension. Though I worked in the Middle Department, I could not refrain from approaching the senior librarian of the Senior Secondary Department for permission to borrow books. At first, she was reluctant, explaining that she catered only to teachers from the Senior Wing. After a great deal of cajoling, she relented and made an exception.

The allure of the books continues.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AI ambitions require balanced growth

I refer to 'AI: India to attract over Rs 18 lakh crore investment' (Feb 18). India's ambition to emerge as a global hub for Artificial Intelligence reflects growing confidence in its digital talent and innovation ecosystem. The projection of over $200 billion in investments across the AI stack over the next two years, as outlined by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, is significant and could accelerate research and applications. The acknowledgement that challenges such as deepfakes and societal harm require a techno-legal approach is also timely. However, caution is essential in the national interest. Investment scale must translate into inclusive outcomes, governance, and measurable public benefit. Reskilling and upskilling must reach workers at scale to manage disruption in IT services. Sustainability, data sovereignty, and benchmarking of sovereign AI models should remain priorities. Ultimately, India's AI journey will be judged not by investment figures alone, but by responsible, equitable, and sustainable deployment of this transformative technology.

K V Chandramouli, Mysuru

Predictable CPI

The editorial, 'A truer measure of consumption' (Feb 18), provides an insightful look into the RBI's decision to update the base year and methodology for the consumer price index. The previous CPI series, with a 2012 base year, was unreflective of modern Indian household expenditure patterns, particularly the food items. The reduction of food and beverages weightage from 45.86% to 36.75% is a rational adjustment given the distribution of free food grains to a large segment of the population. This change will likely lead to a more stable and predictable CPI, less susceptible to volatile food price fluctuations.

Jahnavi Bose, Bengaluru

Defence self sufficient

Apropos 'Modi, Macron launch Kolar H125 chopper plant' (Feb 18), highlights a significant milestone in India's defence manufacturing journey. Strategic partnerships that promote technology transfer and domestic production strengthen both national security and economic growth. With sustained vision and transparency, such initiatives can position India as a global defence manufacturing hub.

Mayank Thapa, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

We have started a yatra from Kasargod to Thiruvananthapuram. We are campaigning against the government's failures. Wherever the government has failed, we are providing alternative plans to the people.

V D Satheesan, Kerala LoP and Congress leader

Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy.

Ernest Benn

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

The slow drift of democracy

A first-hand account of authoritarianism in Bangladesh, consolidated through dynastic power and institutional control

AMEER SHAHUL

Power rarely reveals itself in speeches. It does in silence – in files that stop moving, in approvals that never come, and in systems that respond not to rules, but to power. I learned this first-hand during my work in Bangladesh over the past decade with a global IT major.

I was deeply involved in supporting the company's operations that depended on the Bangladesh government's approval. At one point, a large sum of the company's money became trapped in Bangladeshi banks. Government controls froze the movement of funds out of Dhaka. The situation grew dangerous as a business partner became embroiled in controversy, and the company wanted to exit both the arrangement and the country. The second challenge came when the company wanted to retrench the local employees to prepare for shutting down the operations.

I spent weeks navigating ministries, regulators, and state institutions. Doors did not open easily. Processes did not move on merit alone. They moved through relationships. Through persuasion. Leveraging my relationships with senior government figures ensured that the funds were eventually released and helped the company exit the country. But the experience left me with an uneasy clarity, because I had seen, up close, how deeply the state and power were intertwined.

In those years, Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina was a country of outward stability and inward control. Elections were held, institutions existed, courts functioned, but everything was closely monitored and controlled by Hasina and her coterie. The opposition was systematically weakened; the judiciary increasingly appeared to move in alignment with executive power. Institutions did not collapse overnight. They were slowly reshaped. I read, back then, that at the centre of Bangladesh's political future stood two heirs – two sons. Two legacies with unfinished battles, about to kick off.

One was Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed, known as Joy, who helped me set up a meeting for the then-president and CEO of the company with his mother, Sheikh Hasina, in September 2017 in New York. Educated in Kodaikanal and Bengaluru, he later moved to the United States to study at the University of Texas at Arlington, where he eventually settled. Joy built his life far from Dhaka. He lives in Washington, D.C., from where he remained an influential voice behind his mother's government, shaping its technological and strategic vision.

The other was Tarique Rahman, known as Tarique Zia, the son of Khaleda Zia, Hasina's lifelong rival. If Hasina represented one political dynasty, Khaleda represented another. Like Hasina's rise to power, Tarique Zia's story too unfolded in exile.

Reclaiming the seat

In 2008, facing prosecution and persecution after a witch-hunt by the Hasina government, he left Bangladesh for London. His mother, once Prime Minister, would spend her final years under house arrest and state custody. Exile did not mean silence. Zia waited. From London, he built networks. He prepared, watching closely as the political ground shifted beneath Hasina. He understood that power rarely collapses overnight. It erodes gradually, and when it does, it creates an opening for those patient enough to claim it.

His mother died on December 30, 2025. Five days earlier, he had returned to Dhaka. Not as an exile, but as a claimant to the highest office, two weeks after the interim administration announced national elections. His party rallied behind him, and Zia emerged as the sole contender for the top post. He returned as a man once driven out of his country, now poised to lead it as Prime Minister. Bangladesh had come full circle.

There was a deep irony in this. In 1975, Hasina's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated in a military coup. Hasina survived only because she was abroad. She spent years in exile, including in India. When she returned in 1981, she became the face of democratic resistance, jointly with Khaleda Zia. They fought military rule and demanded institutional freedom. Initially, power changed hands between Hasina and Zia. But eventually, Hasina retained power, and power changes people.

What I witnessed in Bangladesh was not sudden authoritarianism. It was gradual consolidation. Quiet. Procedural. Almost invisible to outsiders. And that is why it felt familiar. Because the erosion of institutions never announces itself dramatically. It unfolds slowly, through wrong administrative decisions, legal adjustments, economic controls, fear, and dependence. I saw it in Bangladesh, not as a spectator, but as a participant navigating its machinery.

Once you have seen it from inside, you recognise its patterns everywhere.

(The writer is an author and environmentalist who worked in Bangladesh as a senior corporate executive till 2020)

Sunetra ascends, Sharad Pawar looms: What awaits NCP?

DATELINE Mumbai

MRITYUNJAY BOSE

The sudden death of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president and Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash in his hometown of Baramati has jolted Maharashtra's politics and thrown the future of the NCP into uncertainty of sorts. His passing does not merely create a leadership vacuum. It unsettles a delicate equilibrium between rival factions of the NCP and their relationship with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Ajit Pawar, 66, was an eight-term MLA and a six-time deputy chief minister with over three decades of ministerial experience. Within days of his death, the party's leadership—including working president Praful Patel and Maharashtra unit president Sunil Tatkare—moved quickly to prevent drift.

On January 31, the NCP legislature party elected his wife, Sunetra Pawar (62), as its leader. She was later sworn in as the deputy chief minister by Governor Acharya Devvrat. The party is also expected to elevate her as its national president in her late husband's place in the weeks to come.

In June-July 2023, Ajit Pawar broke away from the original NCP led by his uncle and mentor Sharad Pawar, forming what was eventually recognised as the official NCP by the Election Commission of India with a clock as its symbol. On the other hand, Sharad Pawar, a four-time chief minister, three-time Union Minister having handled defence and agriculture portfolios, and a former Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, had to settle with NCP (SP) and the *tutari* (man blowing trumpet) as its symbol.

The split reflected deep polarising differences: Ajit Pawar aligning with the BJP-led Maha Yuti-NDA ruling alliance in Maharashtra, while Sharad Pawar remained committed to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)—the opposition marquee coalition with Congress and the Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT), with the I.N.D.I.A bloc.

Sunetra Pawar: A new political force?

Sunetra Pawar's rise signals continuity, but it also raises questions. Unlike her husband, fondly called Ajit *dada*, she does not possess decades of political experience. Her authority currently flows from legacy and sentiment; the decision of Sunetra *vahini*, as she is called, will be unquestionable, for now.

NCP leaders such as Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse-Patil and Dhananjay Munde have publicly indicated that any further merger decision between the NCP factions would rest with her once she formally assumed the presidency. That acknowledgement underlines her centrality.

She must, however, balance competing pressures: maintaining the alliance with the BJP, responding to overtures from Sharad Pawar's camp, and keeping her own legislators united.

The Sharad Pawar factor

Even at 85, Sharad Pawar remains the elder statesman and moral anchor of the NCP (SP). Supriya Sule (56), Sharad Pawar's daughter and four-time MP from Baramati, has played a prominent role in this faction's strategy and is the political heir to Sharad Pawar. In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, she defeated Sunetra Pawar in Baramati—the family bastion—underlining the enduring strength of senior Pawar's base. Sunetra later entered the Rajya Sabha with the BJP's support.

For many within the NCP camp, the central concern about a possible merger is straightforward: in any merged entity, would *saheb* (Sharad Pawar) resume control? His reputation as the 'Maratha strongman', 'Chanakya', 'Machiavelli' and 'Bheeshma Pitamaha of Indian politics' continues to inspire loyalty. After the split, Pawar senior worked to sustain the NCP (SP)'s organisational presence and reaffirm its ideological roots in the opposition. As for Supriya Sule, she has been cautious about discussing merger possibilities.

One of the most consequential debates in the NCP's future revolves around whether reunification between the two factions is feasible—and, if so, what form it might take.

Before Ajit Pawar's death, signals from both sides suggested that back-channel talks were underway. Sharad Pawar had hinted at February as a potential timeline for clarity. NCP (SP) leaders like Jayant Patil and state unit president Shashikant Shinde had openly spoken about the impending merger. Those conversations appear to have slowed, if not stalled.

Ideologically, the distance between the factions is not great, as both are committed to progressive ideas; religion is not the focal point of their politics.

In September 2025, at the Nagpur Rashtrawadi Chintan Shivir, Ajit Pawar had reiterated the NCP's commitment to the idea of *sarva dharma sambhav* and the guiding thought of 'Shiv-Shahu-Phule-Ambedkar' while also asserting commitment to the alliance with the BJP for the welfare and development of Maharashtra. Will Senior Pawar and his daughter go with the BJP? This is now a big question.

There were murmurs that leaders would seek clearance for the merger from the BJP higher-ups when Sunetra Pawar, her sons and the Patel-Tatkare duo called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who were briefed by Fadnavis.

Importantly, this is not just an internal matter of NCP; the BJP's reactions and calculations influence the pace and possibilities of any merger. A unified NCP, especially under Sharad Pawar's stewardship, could complicate the BJP's dominance in several districts ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

Speculation about the BJP eventually absorbing large sections of the NCP persists in political circles. Yet a formal merger appears unlikely for now. The BJP benefits more from partnership than from outright assimilation. For the BJP, leveraging the NCP's organisational strength and grassroots network—especially in rural Maharashtra, particularly in the sugar belt—is very important.

Nevertheless, the BJP's influence certainly shaped the post-split landscape, giving Ajit Pawar's faction dominant visibility and legislative relevance. Its ongoing support will remain a key factor in how the NCP's future pans out, especially in terms of seat shares, electoral pacts, and governance roles in Maharashtra. **DHNS**

A fast-growing network of private schools, the brainchild of a North Carolina neurosurgeon, is teaching 9,000 war orphans and other needy Palestinian youngsters

DAVID M HALBFINGER AND BILAL SHBAIR

David Hasan, a Palestinian American neurosurgeon and the brain behind Academies of Hope, acknowledged that his "peace building" curriculum was politically fraught and that some of his teachers were fearful of blowback from Hamas. NYT

At these Gaza schools, 'peace building' is curriculum

In the midst of a crowded camp for displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza, a gate with a jarringly upbeat poster of a bright red cartoon racing car sticks out. Inside, a passageway to a compound of tent classrooms is adorned with children's drawings more reflective of real life. One shows an orange and yellow home, green grass and olive trees over the handwritten words "I had a house, but today I have nothing."

Raseel al-Shaer, 12, pauses to tell a visitor how good it feels to be learning alongside other children again in al-Mawasi. "Here, it is safe," she says. "No drones or bombs. The best thing is sitting at a desk and seeing the teacher and the board, and holding a pencil again."

Quietly, and despite considerable risk, a network of free private schools for war orphans and other children has sprouted in the Gaza Strip. The schools, called Academies of Hope, are the brainchild of a Palestinian American neurosurgeon, David Hasan, who first visited Gaza on medical relief missions soon after Israel invaded Gaza in the wake of the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023.

Some 9,000 pupils in grades one through nine attend classes in five areas across southern Gaza. They cycle through the schools in three-hour shifts and receive hot meals and medical and psychological care. Though he hasn't been back to Gaza since early 2024, he has built the institutions by forging partnerships with humanitarian groups on the ground, hiring Palestinian staff over WhatsApp and raising money—largely from Jewish donors—in the US and Israel.

Operating schools in any war zone is hard enough, and schools across the enclave are struggling to rebuild. But Hasan has compounded his challenges. He revamped a much-criticised national curriculum and worked to keep Hamas from endangering his schools. He also verifies that none of his staff have ties to militant groups, a charge Israel has levelled against the United Nations agency caring for Palestinians in Gaza and some international aid groups.

The schools teach a modified version of the Palestinian Authority's curriculum, which is taught in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, but without any lessons demonising Jews or glorifying perpetrators of violence against Israel. Hasan said the curriculum changes were made without the authority's permission, prompting threats of reprisal from its education ministry. Israel, the US and the European Union have long complained that the authority's textbooks inculcate hatred and antisemitism. The authority says that its schools appropriately teach Palestinian nationalism, history and culture.

Before-and-after excerpts from the curriculum illustrate the changes:

A math problem comparing the number of "martyrs" killed in the first and second *intifadas* has been replaced with one involving attendance at a West Bank soccer match. A reading comprehension selection praising Dalal Mughrabi—a woman who led a 1978 massacre that killed 38 Israelis, 13 of them children—has been replaced with one about Hind al-Husseini, a pioneering Palestinian educator.

And in an Islamic studies class, a reading about an attempt by Jews to kill the Prophet Muhammad has been replaced with one about the prophet's expressions of respect for Jews.

Hasan's team also added new weekly lessons on "peace building" that teach ideals like tolerance and respect for differences, the golden rule and conflict resolution.

In a video recorded by a school employee during one lesson recently, a boy draws pictures of the Palestinian and Israeli flags side by side. "I wish there will be no more wars so that we can live," he says.

Hasan acknowledged that his peace-building curriculum was politically fraught and that some of his teachers were fearful of blowback from Hamas as it re-establishes its control over much of Gaza. Some faculty members have quit or been fired over such concerns, he said.

He said he was even exploring installing cameras in classrooms to ensure that the curriculum changes are upheld.

On social media, some Gazans have asked whether Hasan's agenda is overly aligned with Israel's. Others, embittered by Hamas, have retorted that it's better to teach tolerance than to teach children to sacrifice themselves.

Discomfort with the subject was clear in interviews with faculty members, most of whom had not been hired from other schools—they were either teaching for the first time or were retired principals. They emphasised that they were using the standard Palestinian curriculum, though when pressed, acknowledged some deletions.

When the first school opened last July, Hasan said he gave the Israeli military the school's coordinates, hoping to protect it. In August, the staff received a warning of an Israeli attack and evacuated. An airstrike soon after hit militants next door. The school suffered little damage but soon found a new site, Hasan said. That first school had space for 200 students, he said. On the first day, 500 showed up. "Some hadn't had food for days," he said.

"The kids were so excited—for the first time they were thriving," he added. "And they didn't want to go home. We had to kick them out in the evening."

Last summer, as malnutrition was taking hold under an Israeli blockade, Hasan said, he bought tons of flour on the black market for people living in Deir al-Balah. Having earned the gratitude of local elders, he said, he persuaded them to give him space for a school. Since then, he said, leaders of big families in Gaza have helped him obtain space for more schools.

One way is by ensuring those families—as well as the Israelis and his donors—that his staff has no ties to militant groups. Hasan said that every employee had been cleared with the Israeli authorities and checked against a US government sanctions list. He also makes clear that his donors include Israelis. "I told the elders, 'I work with the Israelis,'" he said. "They said, 'As long as they don't want to brainwash our kids, we're fine.'"

A researcher and professor at Duke University's medical school, Hasan, 53, had no background in humanitarian aid before the 2023 attack. Nor was he particularly connected to Palestinian life.

He said he felt stirred to action by the war. In December 2023, he was in Gaza on a medical mission, performing 20 operations in 10 days, often without anaesthetics or antiseptics. He recorded video of maggots crawling out of unhealed wounds. Every patient he operated on, he said, eventually died of infection.

He returned the next April with more medical supplies, and had better results.

But he couldn't get over the number of children being orphaned—like a 10-year-old girl whom he watched quickly take charge of her younger siblings after their parents had been killed.

He said he had not returned to Gaza since April 2024 because he had aroused suspicion. When he wasn't operating, he said, he was poking into hospital storerooms and asking questions, trying to learn if Israeli hostages might be on the premises. He fled, he said, when he was alerted that armed militants were looking for him. He has also persuaded José Andrés, the celebrity chef behind *World Central Kitchen*, to provide meals for the students, along with desks, benches and bookshelves. Andrés said he had also donated $500,000 to Hasan's project and planned to give another $500,000.

"Sometimes big problems have very simple solutions that can be solved by somebody with endless energy and not taking no for an answer," he said in an interview. Hasan's sixth school is set to open east of the southern city of Khan Younis with space for 10,000 children, some college classes and even a tiny zoo. And he wants to keep opening schools, with a goal to serve as many as 250,000 youngsters by the end of the year.

The New York Times

A requiem for Nali-Kali

D JEEVAN KUMAR

The reported decision of the Government of Karnataka to phase out the Nali-Kali scheme beginning in the 2026–27 academic year (*DH*, Feb 11) marks more than an administrative change. For many educators, parents, and policy observers, it feels like the quiet fading of one of the most creative experiments in India's public education.

Launched in 1995–96, Nali-Kali—literally "learn and play"—was Karnataka's pioneering effort to reimagine early primary education in government schools. At a time when rote learning, rigid seating, and teacher-centred instruction dominated classrooms, it introduced activity-based learning, colourful learning corners, peer interaction, and flexible pacing. It was especially designed for multi-grade rural classrooms, where resources were scarce but human potential abundant.

For nearly three decades, the programme reshaped the experience of young children in thousands of government schools. Classrooms became vibrant spaces of movement and expression. Children sang, narrated, solved puzzles, worked in groups, and learnt collaboratively. Teachers, instead of merely transmitting textbook content, became facilitators of learning.

Peer dynamics in multi-grade settings fostered cooperation rather than competition. Activity zones reduced hierarchical rigidity. Children progressed at varied paces without stigma. The atmosphere was warmer, less authoritarian. In an era that increasingly recognises mental well-being and inclusion as central to schooling, such attributes are not luxuries; they are foundational to equitable education.

For first-generation learners—many from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, minority communities, and economically vulnerable households—this shift was transformative. School ceased to be intimidating; it became welcoming.

More importantly, Nali-Kali represented more than a technique. It echoed principles akin to Mahatma Gandhi's *Nai Talim* philosophy—learning through activity, integrating head, heart and hand, and rooting education in joy rather than fear. Gandhi believed that education must cultivate confidence, creativity and moral development alongside literacy. Nali-Kali reflected that spirit in contemporary form.

The government's rationale for phasing out the scheme cannot be dismissed lightly. Reports suggest concerns about poor learning outcomes, implementation gaps and increased teacher workload. Foundational literacy and numeracy are now national priorities. If evidence shows children are not achieving essential competencies, corrective action is necessary. But discarding the model entirely risks conflating implementation failures with conceptual inadequacy. The central question remains: was the problem the philosophy of Nali-Kali—or its implementation?

Many policy innovations falter not because they are conceptually flawed, but because they are unevenly institutionalised. Teacher training may have been inconsistent. Monitoring systems may have assessed outcomes in ways misaligned with activity-based pedagogy. Multi-grade classrooms, though pedagogically rich, require sustained administrative support. Without it, even the most imaginative models struggle.

As Karnataka shifts towards structured single-grade classrooms and extends remedial initiatives like Ganitha-Ganaka, efficiency may increase. Standardisation may improve assessment alignment. Yet one must ask: what might be lost?

The debate compels reflection on how we define "quality". If quality is reduced solely to standardised test scores, pedagogical diversity narrows. But education also includes confidence in speaking, curiosity in questioning, freedom from fear, and the ability to collaborate. These outcomes are harder to quantify but deeply consequential.

Field reports over the years often noted reduced early-grade dropout, higher participation, and greater parental trust in government schools where Nali-Kali was effectively implemented. For marginalised communities, government schools are not laboratories; they are lifelines. When children ran into classrooms with enthusiasm, the state earned moral credibility.

Public policy in India often moves in cycles of innovation and abandonment. Institutional memory weakens. Teachers adapt repeatedly to shifting frameworks. Continuity becomes the casualty of reform.

If Nali-Kali must be restructured, let reform not erase its legacy. A more balanced approach could have involved independent evaluation of long-term outcomes, teacher training, hybrid models combining structure with creativity, and improved monitoring mechanisms aligned with activity-based pedagogy.

A requiem is not an act of nostalgia. It is an act of recognition.

Nali-Kali taught us that government schools could innovate. It demonstrated that joy and learning are not opposites. It carried forward, in its own modest way, the ethos that education should serve the last child with dignity.

(The writer is an honorary professor at Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 1976

Delhi deplores Bangla stand on Ganga

New Delhi, February 18
India today described as "totally unacceptable and wholly unjustifiable" the Bangla Desh demand that further talks on sharing of the Ganga waters could be held only if India stopped the withdrawal of water from Farakka during the lean months from mid-March to mid- May. A spokesman said here today that India had proposed February 11 as the date for the next round of talks and deeply regretted a statement by Bangla Desh that such talks without preconditions would be "meaningless."

25 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 2001

Govt puts off decision on truce extension

New Delhi, Feb 18
In a sudden move, the government tonight put off a scheduled meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security where the crucial decision on the fate of the three-month old unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir was expected to have been made. A government spokesman said the CCS could not meet because of the "extended deliberations" in the meeting of the National Committee on Disaster Management, where the Gujarat earthquake relief-related issues were taken up.

OASIS | SUDHA UMASHANKER

Harnessing the radiance of the sun

The Uttarayana *punyakala* has just begun. This marks both the birthday and the northward journey of *surya*, the Sun God as the seasons change from the dark, cold winter to the harvest season and spring and summer. Known variously as Aditya, Ravi, Diwakar, and Surya, sun is believed to travel on his chariot drawn by seven horses and is considered the visible manifestation of *Brahman* itself.

A popular *mantra* in praise of Surya, the son of Sage Kashyapa and Aditi, describes his red orange hue much alike the hibiscus flower, his radiance, his ability to dispel darkness, and wash away the sins of those who sincerely worship him besides imbuing them with strength and energy.

Incidentally when Sanjana, daughter of the celestial architect Viswakarma and the wife of Surya found his light and brilliance too intense she confided in her father who used his celestial lathe to scrape off some of Surya's body to mute the brilliance and repurposed the scrapings to fashion an array of weapons: the Sudarshan *chakra* (Vishnu's weapon) Shiva's trident, the *vel* or spear that Karthikeya wields etc.

Surya is deemed a star in astronomy while according to Vedic astrology he is a very important planet due to his position in the centre of the solar system.

The number seven holds great significance for Surya. The seven horses of his chariot stand for the seven days of the week (Sunday being his day) and also the seven colours of the rainbow.

What's more, the seven different rays that emanate from him gave rise to and shed light on the Moon, and planets such as Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and Mars.

The 12 wheels of his chariot represent the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

That Surya is the giver of energy is clearly mentioned in the episode in the Valmiki *Ramayana* wherein an exhausted Rama during the battle with Ravana was given the *Aditya Hridayam stotra* by Sage Agastya. Rama chanted it thrice over and emerged victorious.

The Sun's healing properties can be gauged from a study of chromotherapy. The Surya Namaskar, a *yogasana* most practitioners will endorse is considered a great energiser, a beautiful way to supplicate before Surya and express gratitude for all his blessings.

Proof of penetration must to prove rape: HC

Says act preceding it without ejaculation is attempt to rape

BILASPUR, PTI

Noting that the convict's act preceded partial penetration without ejaculation, the Chhattisgarh High Court reduced the seven-year sentence awarded by a trial court in a 2004 rape case, convicting the man instead of attempted rape.

Partially accepting the accused's appeal, the HC reduced the convict's sentence to three years and six months' rigorous imprisonment.

"The proof of penetration, even if partial, is necessary to prove rape. The evidence available in the present case does not prove complete rape, but it does prove that the accused attempted rape," Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas stated in the order on February 16.

Additional Sessions Judge, Dhamtari (Camp-Raipur), had convicted Vasudeo Gond on April 6, 2005, under Section 376(1) of the IPC and sentenced him to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. He was also sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment under Section 342 IPC. Both sentences were to run concurrently.

2004 CASE

- HC reduces 7-year rape sentence to 3.5 years
- Convict held guilty of attempted rape, not rape
- Victim's statements on penetration found contradictory
- Medical exam shows intact hymen

Gond had lured the victim, a resident of Dhamtari district, to his house on May 21, 2004, and raped her. He locked her in a room and tied her hands and feet. A case was registered at the Arjuni police station.

The prosecution examined 19 witnesses during the trial.

In her statement, the victim had claimed forced sexual intercourse by the accused. However, during cross-examination, she gave contradictory statements regarding penetration. Medical examination revealed an intact hymen, but the possibility of partial penetration was raised. The FSL report also found human sperm in some samples.

The HC noted that the victim's statement lacked clarity regarding penetration. The medical evidence also failed to establish complete penetration. Citing various SC decisions, the HC stated that proof of penetration, even if partial, is necessary to prove rape.

"The evidence of the victim is corroborated with the medical evidence brought on record by the prosecution and law on the subject. It is quite vivid that an offence of attempt to commit rape is made out against the appellant, as there is partial penetration by the appellant.

"As such, the act of the appellant forcibly taking the victim inside the room, closing the doors with the motive of carnal knowledge, was the end of 'preparation' to commit the offence. His action of stripping the victim and himself, and rubbing his genitals against those of the victims and partial penetration, was indeed an endeavour to commit sexual intercourse," the HC stated.

Branded witch, woman set on fire with baby in arms in J'khand

CHAIBASA, PTI: A 32-year-old woman and her baby were allegedly set on fire in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district after she was branded a witch, police said on Wednesday.

The incident happened at a village in the Kumardungi police station area late on Tuesday, and four people have been arrested, they said.

The woman's husband was also injured in the attack, but he managed to escape. He spent the night at a relative's place and reached the police station on Wednesday morning.

In his complaint, he alleged that he woke up in the middle of the night after hearing that some people were calling him and his wife.

When he went out, he saw that around a dozen people had gathered, accusing his wife of practising witchcraft. Amid the commotion, the mob poured kerosene on his wife, who had their one-year-old baby in her arms, and set them on fire, according to the complaint.

They died on the spot, police said.

A relative of the husband, who lived in the same village, died on Tuesday following a prolonged illness, and they blamed his wife for it, police said.

A case has been registered, they said.

Mallya unable to return due to UK legal curbs, court told

MUMBAI, DHNS

A week after the Bombay High Court asked fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya to "come back" to India and face the law instead of challenging it from London, his counsel on Wednesday said it was not possible to specify a date because he is barred from leaving the United Kingdom due to ongoing legal proceedings.

"Vijay Mallya does not have an active passport after it was revoked by the Indian government and, hence, he cannot give a definite date of return to India," Senior Advocate Amit Desai said in his submission to a division bench comprising Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad.

Vijay Mallya

"Mallya is not permitted to leave or attempt to leave England and Wales, or apply for any international document. Because of this, the petitioner is unable to precisely state when he will return to India," the submission said.

The senior counsel reiterated that Mallya's presence was not required in the country for the court to hear his pleas against the fugitive tag and the provisions of the Act.

"If he (Mallya) were to appear in India, then all these proceedings would be rendered irrelevant as the statute says that once the offender appears in the concerned court of law, then all these orders would be set aside," Desai told the court.

The bench directed the Union government to file its reply to Mallya's statement and posted the matter for further hearing next month.

Mallya has filed two petitions in the Bombay High Court — one challenging an order declaring him a fugitive economic offender and the other questioning the constitutional validity of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act.

(With PTI inputs)

Telangana man suspected of raping, murdering child found dead in pond

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

A case of the rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl in Madanapalle took a dramatic turn after the prime suspect was found dead in a nearby pond, with suicide suspected.

Annamayya district Superintendent of Police K Dheeraj said the victim — a second-grade student and the daughter of a handloom worker in Kanasanivaripalle of the district's Kurabalakota mandal — went missing on Monday afternoon while playing near her home because school was closed due to Shivaratri.

Her parents, who had been away at work, launched a frantic search upon returning, and later filed a missing-person complaint with the Madanapalle police.

CCTV footage helped the police zero in on 30-year-old neighbour K Kulvardhan, who had a criminal record. The girl's body was found inside a drum in his house. The police suspected she had been raped and strangled.

The find sparked public fury. Family members and locals demanded custody of Kulvardhan, staging a sit-in protest that blocked the national highway for hours on Tuesday evening, dispersing only after the Annamayya district police assured them that he would face justice.

As officers transported Kulvardhan to the station on Tuesday night, he escaped from the vehicle. A massive manhunt ensued and, early Wednesday, special teams recovered his body in a pond in Kanasanivaripalle village. Initial findings pointed to suicide.

Madanapalle MLA Shahjahan Basha expressed outrage, spoke directly with the victim's parents, and informed the chief minister and home minister. He pledged full government support.

The police have registered cases related to both the murder and the suspect's death, with investigations underway to establish the motive behind the brutality.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

DIDN'T YOU GET MY TWO TEXTS?
OOPS, SORRY! MY PHONE MUST BE ON SILENT
WELL, HOW CAN I GET THROUGH TO YOU IF YOU HAVE YOUR RINGER TURNED OFF?
HMM... GOOD POINT
BUMSTEAD! I'VE CALLED YOU FIVE TIMES ABOUT THE BOFFMAN REPORT! WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER?!!
WHOOPS... I MUST HAVE LEFT MY PHONE ON SILENT

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

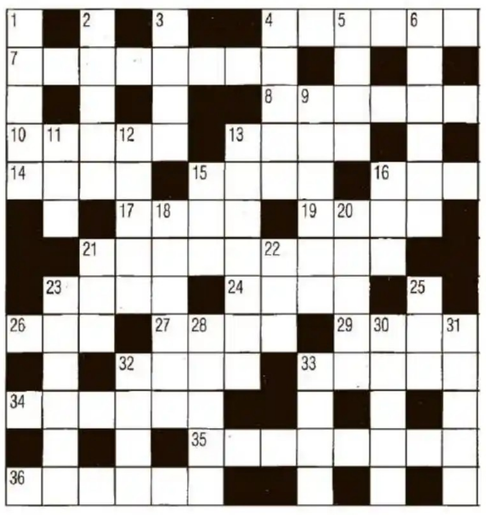
THE GENERAL HAS AN APPOINTMENT IN TEN MINUTES, BUT HE'S NAPPING. SHOULD I WAKE HIM?
WHO'S IT WITH?
LT. FUZZ
LET HIM REST
HE'LL NEED IT
GREG + MORT WALKER

Peanuts

Marvin

SINCE BITSY IS A LION FOR HALLOWEEN, MAYBE MARVIN COULD BE THE SCARECROW OR TIN MAN?
FROM "THE WIZARD OF OZ"?? A MOVIE MADE DECADES BEFORE HE WAS BORN?
WELL, IT'S REALLY MORE FOR US
THAT MOVIE WAS MADE DECADES BEFORE WE WERE BORN, TOO!!

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12357



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
4 Such a hole as to make you stare? (6)
7 Such a detective may charm, perhaps, by his manner (8)
8 A German substitute (6)
10 A surname? Everybody has one (5)
13 Makes sure that it's returned undamaged (4)
14 The 'red' kind backs out of the way (4)
15 She can crack a nut (4)
16 Today, a word of warning? (3)
17 Sugar beet extract we all have (4)
19 Prepared to admit (4)
21 A twister's device to get a drink (9)
23 List of protagonists (4)
24 Ten volunteers aren't much (4)
26 A masked marauder! (3)
27 Any one young fellow out of hundreds (4)
29 How Charlie has to go short (4)
32 It's not to be sniffed at! (4)
33 Plan well for a famous abode (5)
34 Coronation route? (6)
35 Shows a consuming interest in being humble! (4,4)
36 A scholarly introduction (6)

DOWN
1 A lad's fresh food (5)
2 Look kindly on the photographer (5)
3 The aching part due to wagging? (4)
4 A faster colour than red? (5)
5 Afterthought about an American cat (4)
6 Thought it up in time (6)
9 The lab's reply? (6)
11 Collegiate member? (3)
12 Is it mostly borrowed from jargon? (5)
13 Go down in reserve team? (7)
15 Vessel of an unfamiliar kind (3)
16 Not the first to get fresh (3)
18 Having a growing potential (6)
20 She has taste (5)
21 He guides many an animal (3)
22 Being timid, coolly robbed of some dollars (3)
23 A bad lot getting worse? (6)
25 Organ necessary in rehearsal (3)
28 Ring true, possibly, in a superficial sense (5)
30 It's dangerous to be breezy with a hothead (5)
31 School we joined with some gusto (5)
32 Plant that grows as a sort of tree out East (4)
33 See timber in terms of finance (4)

EASY

ACROSS
4 Tune (6)
7 Australian city (8)
8 Injury, wound (6)
10 Book of maps (5)
13 Canvas shelter (4)
14 Prophet (4)
15 Plant ovule (4)
16 Primate (3)
17 Way of walking (4)
19 Slippery fishes (4)
21 Boxer's training item (9)
23 Regrets (4)
24 Nobleman (4)
26 Dowel (3)
27 Caution (4)
29 Revise (4)
32 Untidy state (4)
33 Shoot from cover (5)
34 Provides food (6)
35 Teaches (8)
36 Earth, for example (6)

DOWN
1 Spanish snacks (5)
2 Beautiful girl (5)
3 Hearing organs (4)
4 Riotous brawl (5)
5 Missing (4)
6 Sags (6)
9 Make beloved (6)
11 Hot drink (3)
12 Quarrel (5)
13 Ties up (7)
15 So or thus (3)
16 Everything (3)
18 Solution (6)
20 Girl's name (5)
21 Dog breed (3)
22 Forbid (3)
23 Recollect (6)
25 Drink delicately (3)
28 Thing of value (5)
30 The aforementioned (5)
31 Tantalise (5)
32 Intend (4)
33 Hosiery item (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12356

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, P-O-ints 7, Head-land 8, Base 10, The red 11, Minute 14, Ale 16, Sires 17, Lady 19, Came-L 21, Dated 22, Worst 23, Chap 26, Woman 28, Boa 29, Asides 30, Fan-Ned 31, Lark 32, Crevas-se 33, Andrew.
DOWN: 1, Pistol 2, N-early 3, Sh-ed 4, Advised 5, Namur 6, Id-L-es 8, Bead 9, SE-e 12, Nil 13, Tessa 15, Patsy 18, A-DI-os 19, Car 20, Met 21, Done-gal 22, Wad 23, Conrad 24, Hank 25, Padsaw 26, Watch 27, Mixed 28, Baa 30, Flea.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Safari 7, Renovate 8, Taco 10, Toucan 11, Cinema 14, Bun 16, Comet 17, Ties 19, Cedar 21, Label 22, Satan 23, Drew 26, Nadir 28, Fee 29, Amends 30, Locate 31, Arid 32, Portrait 33, Eyeful.
DOWN: 1, Septet 2, Abacus 3, Iron 4, Topical 5, Harem 6, Get at 8, Tube 9, Can 12, Nor 13, Merge 15, Debar 18, Islam 19, Cat 20, Den 21, Larders 22, Sin 23, Decide 24, Read 25, Weevil 26, Nappy 27, Decry 28, For 30, Late.

◆SU-DO-KU-6834◆

8	2	9			4			7
				8	9	6		
3							4	
	8				1	7		
			8		7			
		1	2				9	
	9							6
		3	6	1				
2			9			4	3	5

medium

SOLUTION TO 6833

3	7	8	1	2	5	6	9	4
9	1	6	4	3	8	5	7	2
5	4	2	6	7	9	1	3	8
7	2	9	5	4	1	3	8	6
4	8	1	3	6	2	9	5	7
6	5	3	8	9	7	2	4	1
2	3	5	7	8	6	4	1	9
8	6	4	9	1	3	7	2	5
1	9	7	2	5	4	8	6	3

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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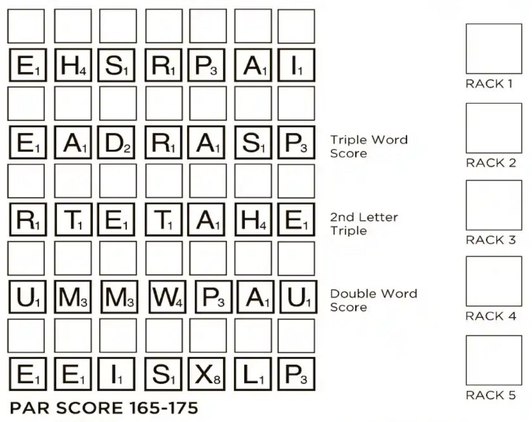

E1 H4 S1 R1 P3 A1 I1
E1 A1 D2 R1 A1 S1 P3
Triple Word Score
R1 T1 E1 T1 A1 H4 E1
2nd Letter Triple
U1 M3 M3 W4 P3 A1 U1
Double Word Score
E1 E1 I1 S1 X8 L1 P3
RACK 1
RACK 2
RACK 3
RACK 4
RACK 5

PAR SCORE 165-175
by JUDD

FIVE RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

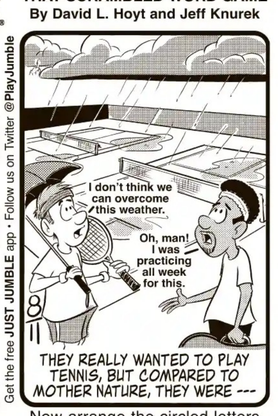
R1 E1 W4 E1 I1 G2 H4 — RACK 1 = 72
A1 N1 A1 G2 R1 A1 M3 — RACK 2 = 80
K5 O1 W4 T1 O1 W4 — RACK 3 = 20
S1 W4 A1 M3 P3 Y4 — RACK 4 = 16
PAR SCORE 120-130 — JUDD'S TOTAL 188

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CIHKT
YMRMU
GMTNAE
TOSOHM


I don't think we can overcome this weather.
Oh, man! I was practicing all week for this.
THEY REALLY WANTED TO PLAY TENNIS, BUT COMPARED TO MOTHER NATURE, THEY WERE ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Print answer here: ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ELITE DITTO THROWN NIMBLE
Answer: An instrument's different pitches are written down using lines and symbols to — DENOTE THEM

HITORI-3288

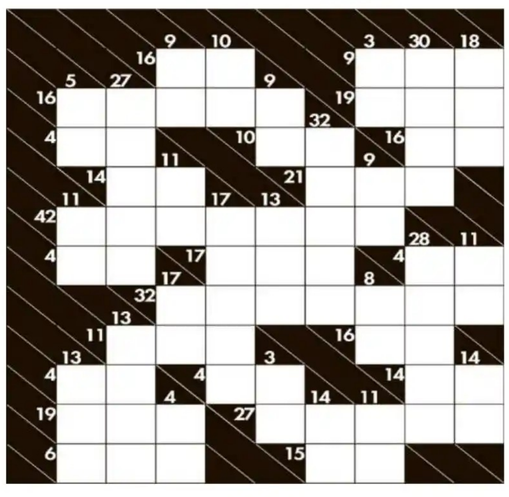
6	4	2	8	3	1	6	6
2	3	8	4	5	6	6	7
2	6	6	2	8	7	1	8
8	2	6	8	7	4	5	1
6	7	6	6	4	6	2	1
1	8	4	5	2	2	7	3
5	6	3	6	1	8	7	4
4	1	6	7	8	6	7	2

SOLUTION TO 3287

■	7	■	5	8	4	1	3
6	8	4	■	7	■	2	5
1	6	■	8	2	5	■	7
7	2	8	3	4	■	6	■
■	4	■	1	3	8	5	6
3	■	5	7	1	■	8	2
4	5	7	2	■	1	3	8
8	■	1	■	5	3	7	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

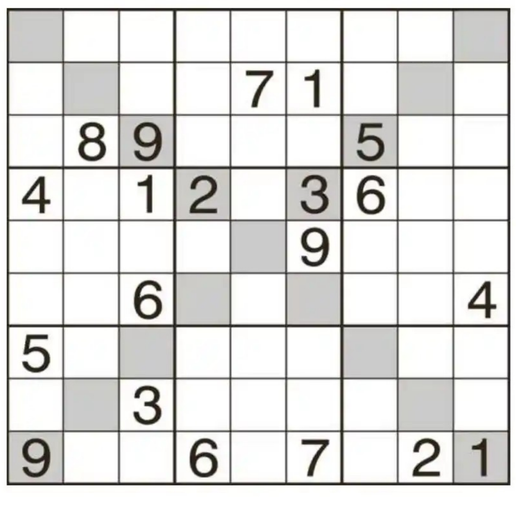
KAKURO- 3288



SOLUTION TO 3287

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3832



SOLUTION TO 3831

6	2	9	1	8	4	3	7	5
8	3	5	9	6	7	1	4	2
1	7	4	3	5	2	8	9	6
9	1	2	8	4	6	7	5	3
7	4	6	5	2	3	9	8	1
5	8	3	7	1	9	2	6	4
4	6	1	2	7	8	5	3	9
2	9	7	6	3	5	4	1	8
3	5	8	4	9	1	6	2	7

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Maya dismisses SP alliance rumours ahead of UP polls

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

BSP supremo Mayawati on Wednesday refuted rumours of an alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP) in the next Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls due next year, terming media reports in this regard as "fake news".

Mayawati

Speaking to reporters here, Mayawati reiterated that her party would go solo in the Assembly elections.

She said the rumours of an alliance were an attempt to "weaken" her party and asked workers not to believe them.

Mayawati alleged that the Congress, BJP and SP were "anti-Ambedkar" and were resorting to disinformation to damage her party's prospects in the forthcoming polls.

The BSP chief's remarks came in the wake of SP president Akhilesh Yadav's recent statement that SP–BSP relations were strengthening and would grow stronger in the days to come.

Akhilesh had also said that socialist ideologue Ram Manohar Lohia and B R Ambedkar had worked together to give a new direction to politics in the country. "Even SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and BSP founder Kanshiram had entered into an electoral alliance in UP," he had said.

Sabarimala 'tantri' gets bail in gold heist case

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: With Sabarimala Ayyappa temple "tantri" (traditional head priest) Kandararu Rajeevaru getting bail in the temple gold heist case on Wednesday, allegations that the ongoing probe was being sabotaged gained steam.

Rajeevaru was granted bail by the vigilance court in Kollam around 40 days after his arrest. The prosecution objected, but the court granted bail, reportedly because there was no strong evidence of his direct involvement in the gold heist.

Many others, including the key accused, Bengaluru-based Malayali Unnikrishnan Potti, were granted bail by default because the chargesheet was not filed within 90 days of their arrest.

Congress leader V D Satheesan said the Opposition had already expressed concern that the probe was being sabotaged as members of the CPM, which heads the ruling Left Democratic Front in the state, were also involved in the case.

RS polls for 37 seats on March 16

Poll body announces schedule; NDA eyes big jump

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Elections to 37 Rajya Sabha seats across 10 states, falling vacant in April, will be held on March 16, with the ruling BJP-led NDA expected to gain substantially, buoyed by its strong performance in the Maharashtra, Bihar, and Odisha Assembly polls over the past two years.

Maharashtra will see the highest number of seats up for election at seven, followed by Tamil Nadu (6), Bihar and West Bengal (5 each), Odisha (4), Assam (3), Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana (2 each), and Himachal Pradesh with one seat. Another 35 seats will go to polls later this year.

Announcing the schedule, the Election Commission said the 37 seats are falling vacant on April 2 and 9, and notifications for the polls will be issued on February 26. The last date for filing nominations is March 5.

The prominent MPs retiring include Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh (JD(U)), Union Minister Ramdas Athawale (RPI-A), Sharad Pawar (NCP-SP), Abhishek Singhvi (Congress), M Thambidurai (AIADMK), Tiruchi Siva (DMK) and Upendra Kushwaha (RLM).

Among those retiring, the BJP accounts for nine MPs, while its allies JD(U) have two, and RPI, AIADMK, Tamil Manila Congress and RLM have one each. The I.N.D.I.A bloc has a total of 19 MPs retiring — Congress, DMK and Trinamool Congress (4 each), NCP-SP and RJD (2 each), and Shiv Sena-UBT, CPI(M), and an Independent (1 each). The BJD has two MPs retiring, while the BRS has one.

The NDA is likely to increase its tally from 15 to 25, while the I.N.D.I.A bloc may have to settle for 10, down from 19.

In Maharashtra, where NCP-SP (2), SS-UBT (1) and Congress (1) have four retiring MPs, it may have to settle for a single seat following the I.N.D.I.A bloc's near-decimation in the 2024 Assembly polls.

Bihar has five seats going to polls, with the RJD and JD(U) holding two each and RLM one. The BJP is expected to stake claim to two seats, while the Opposition will struggle to secure the fifth, as the I.N.D.I.A bloc will be short by at least six votes. With Harivansh retiring, it remains to be seen whether he returns as Deputy Chairman for a third term if re-elected to the Rajya Sabha.

In Odisha, the BJP is likely to win three of the four seats, with the fourth expected to go to the BJD. The Congress has said it will reach out to the BJD to field a joint independent candidate.

This round of polls will also see CPI(M) losing its last MP from West Bengal, even as the Trinamool Congress is set to retain four seats. The BJP is likely to secure the fifth seat. In Assam, the BJP is expected to retain its two seats.

ACROSS 10 STATES

- Vacancies spread across 10 states; Maharashtra tops with 7 seats
- Sharad Pawar, Singhvi, Harivansh among MPs bowing out
- BJP has 9 retiring MPs; allies JD(U) 2, others 1 each
- I.N.D.I.A bloc sees 19 MPs retiring across Cong, DMK, TMC, NCP (SP), RJD

ED 'terrorised' during search at Kolkata I-PAC office, SC told

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday claimed before the Supreme Court that the central agency has been "terrorised" during its search operations at the I-PAC office in Kolkata in view of obstructions by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and others.

The court adjourned to March 18 the hearing on a plea moved by the ED seeking a CBI probe against Mamata and others.

The search operation was carried out at the I-PAC office and the premises of its director in connection with an alleged coal pilferage scam.

The court deferred the hearing after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta contended that a rejoinder would be filed during the day.

During the brief hearing, advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for the respondents, submitted that the agency must justify its "weaponisation". "They will have to justify how an agency can be weaponised like this," he said.

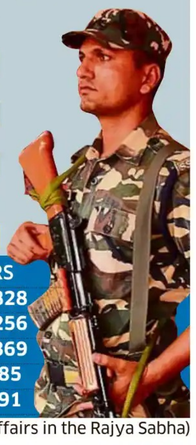
To this, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju for the ED responded, "No, agency is not weaponised, it has been terrorised".

The court was dealing with the plea filed by the ED under Article 32 against the CM and certain state police officers.

Vacancies, attrition and losses: THE PARAMILITARY STORY

CAPF	Sanctioned Strength	Present Strength	Vacancies
CRPF	3,30,818	3,03,418	27,400
BSF	2,71,877	2,57,346	14,531
CISF	1,98,772	1,59,956	28,342
ITBP	1,05,136	92,803	12,333
SSB	1,00,549	94,331	6,784
Assam Rifles	65,540	61,791	3,749
Total	10,72,692	9,69,645	93,139

Year	Suicide	Fratricide	Resignation	VRS
2021	158	11	1,255	10,828
2022	138	6	1,183	11,256
2023	157	2	2,037	10,369
2024	149	1	2,724	9,785
2025	143	4	2,333	4,291



(Source: Ministry of Home Affairs in the Rajya Sabha)

TN panel seeks Assembly role in Guv appointments

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

A three-member committee appointed by the Tamil Nadu government to review Centre-state relations has recommended that governors be selected from a panel of three names approved by the state Assembly, with appointees serving a single, fixed, non-renewable five-year term.

The committee also suggested extending the freeze on the number of Lok Sabha seats for another 100 years — until 2126 — or until the Total Fertility Rates of all states converge within a narrow band around the national average, whichever comes earlier. It also suggested retaining the Lok Sabha's maximum strength at 550 seats and keeping Legislative Assemblies at their current strengths, while mandating periodic intra-state delimitation.

"The 1976 freeze's rationale remains compelling: to avoid penalising states that achieved population stabilisation," the report, authored by retired Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph, retired bureaucrat K Ashok Vardhan Shetty and academic Prof M Naganathan, said. Chief Minister MK Stalin appointed the committee in April 2025.

On the issue of the governor, the report recommended amending Article 155 to bind the President to appoint as governor one of three names approved by a majority of the total membership of the State Legislative Assembly.

The panel also suggested that the governor shall be removed only through a resolution of the State Legislative Assembly passed by a majority of its total membership, binding the President to act on such resolution in 14 days.

"Amend Article 157 to require that the governor, in addition to the existing requirements, shall be an outsider to the state, an eminent person in some recognised field of public life, and shall not have held office in a political party or any office under the executive, legislature or judiciary during the preceding five years," the report added.

On education, the committee said since the fifty-year experiment with concurrency has failed, Entry 25 of the Concurrent List and Entry 11 of the State List should be amended to transfer Education, including technical education, medical education and universities to the State List.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Committee appointed by CM Stalin in April 2025
- Panel suggests fixed, non-renewable 5-yr term for governors
- Mandatory timelines for assent on state bills
- Suggests shifting Education fully to State List

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ
ಕ್ರಸಂ.: ಕೆ.ಎಮ್.ಸಿ.ಆರ್.ಐ./ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ/406/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 18–02–26

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನುರಿತ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಿವೃತ್ತ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಧೀಶರು / ತತ್ಸಮಾನ ಹುದ್ದೆಯ ನಿವೃತ್ತ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಧೀಶರನ್ನು ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಕಾನೂನು ಸಲಹೆಗಾರರನ್ನಾಗಿ ನೇಮಕ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಕುರಿತಂತೆ ಅರ್ಹ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಧೀಶರುಗಳಿಗೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ 27–02–2026 ರಂದು ಮುಂಜಾನೆ 11 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ನೇರ ಸಂದರ್ಶನವನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಆಸಕ್ತರು ಸಂದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗಬಹುದು. ಕರ್ತವ್ಯಗಳು / ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳು / ಷರತ್ತುಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಇನ್ನಿತರೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ https://kmcrihubballi.karnataka.gov.in/english ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಅಳವಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– (ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು)
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ

Government of Karnataka
Karnataka Public Works, Department, Sirasi Division(U.K), Karnataka Ph: 08384-223164, Fax: 08384-224100
No. PWD/SR./Dn/AE/IFT/ 3054 MDR Road/2025-26/3526 D ate: 16.02.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (IFT) (SHORT TERM) KW-4

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

(1) The Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Sirasi invites tenders from eligible tenderers, for the construction of works detailed in the Table below. The tenderers may submit tenders for any or all of the works given in the Table. **The price tender which will be opened only if the Tenderer is found to be qualified to execute the tendered works. The Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for award of the contract. (26.03.2021)** (2) Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka e-Procurement website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/eportal/index.seam** under login for Contractors: (3) Tenders must be accompanied by EMD Declaration form Proforma attached (4) Tenders must be electronically submitted (on-line through internet) with in the date and time published in e-procurement portal. The technical bid will be opened after prescribed time and date in the eprocurement portal, in the presence of the Tenderers who wish to attend at the Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Department, SIRSI Division. (5) Other details can be seen in the tender documents
(Total: 1 Work)

(1) Last date and time for Tender Queries/Clarifications: **02-03-2026 up to 16.00.00** (2) Last Date and Time for receipt of tenders: **03-03-2026 up to 16.00.00** (3) Date and Time for opening of Technical Bid: **04-03-2026 @ 16.30.00** (4) Date and Time for opening of Financial Bid: **05-03-2026 @16.00.00**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Public Work Department Division
Sirsi (Uttara Kannada)

DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/1109/25-26 dt. 18.02.2026

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Karnataka Housing Board invite tender through Karnataka Public Procurement portal for below mentioned works.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Work Indent & IFT No.	Amount put to tender (in Rs.)	Last date of submission
1.	Renovation & Repair works for KHB Office / Shopping Complex at Yelahanka, Bengaluru Urban District.	Tender Reference No. KHB/2025-26/OW/ WORK_INDENT 711 & IFT No. 156/2025-26, Date: 12.02.2026	1,80,85,230/-	27.02.2026 Upto 4.00 PM
2.	Construction of RCC Mother Drain for Nala in KHB Layout at Huskur Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru Urban District.	Tender Reference No. KHB/2025-26/OW/ WORK_INDENT 699 & IFT No. 152/2025-26, Date: 11.02.2026	1,91,04,133/-	25.02.2026 Upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned Office Address:
Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.
Telephone No.: 080-22273511 / 080-22100077. Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

DIPR/CP/YC/5701/2025-26 Sd/- Executive Engineer, KHB, Bengaluru

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
LABORATORY FOR ELECTRO-OPTICS SYSTEMS (LEOS)
PEENYA, BANGALORE-560058.
LEOS CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE DIVISION (LCMD)
[Phone: (080)-22685088, 5047, 5045, 5086, (080)-28392310]

BRIEF NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (NIET)

On behalf of the President of India, item rate e-tender are invited for the following works:

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of Compressed Air Facility at optics block, MEMS area and ETF lab, LEOS Campus, Peenya, Bangalore- 560058. NIET No: C&MG/LEOS/Compressed Air/ETN-02/2025-26 Dtd: 10.02.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 17.12 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 34,240/-; Period of Completion in months :** 05 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 19.02.2026; **Closing Date :** 09.03.2026

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Rate contract for Supply, laying and termination of LT cables at LEOS campuses Peenya, Bangalore-560058 – for a period of one year. NIET No: LEOS/CMG/EMN-07/2025-26 Dtd: 10.02.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 12.48 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 24,960/-; Period of Completion in months :** 12 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 20.02.2026; **Closing Date :** 10.03.2026

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Electrical works for proposed extension and modifications to Director's Office at 1st Floor of Admin block, LEOS Campus, Peenya, Bangalore-560058. NIET No: LEOS/CMG/EMW-09/2025-26 Dtd: 10.02.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 12.17 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 24,340/-; Period of Completion in months :** 6 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 18.02.2026; **Closing Date :** 06.03.2026

Interested tenderers may please refer detailed Notice Inviting **e-Tender** (NIET) for eligibility criteria and other details in website: www.isro.gov.in and download the tender documents from www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO

Sd/-
GROUP DIRECTOR
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP (C&MG)
URSC, BANGALORE.

KARNATAKA SILK INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
3rd & 4th Floors, Public Utility Building, M.G. Road, Bengaluru – 560 001.
Ph: 080- 25586550/25586402 Email: info@ksicsilk.com

No: KSIC/PR/ITEMS-W/01/2025-26 Date: 16.02.2026

NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal only)

Tenders are invited through KPP Portal from Manufacturers/Dealers/Contractors for the below detailed items & work:

Sl. No.	Particulars	EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date for uploading the Tender	Technical Bids Opening Date
1.	**Re-Tender** for Providing 30 Nos. Shuttle Guard for Looms.	1,400/-	26.02.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	27.02.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
	Re-Tender for Providing 20 Nos. Motor Guard for Looms.	1,200/-		
	Re-Tender for Providing 30 Nos. SS back rest rollers for Looms.	10,300/-		
	Re-Tender for Providing 02 Nos. 600 m3/hr Blower for CETP.	8,100/-		
2.	**Tender** for Job Work For Stitching of 500 Nos. Silk Kurthas with Neck Embroidery, KSIC Logo and Size on The Collar (Including KSIC Design Box with label mentioning the size, colour and price)	6,000/-	17.03.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	18.03.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
3.	**Tender** for Job Work For Digital Printing, Processing and Finishing of 500 Nos. of Crepe Silk Sarees.	19,000/-	17.03.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	18.03.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.

Tender documents, details of the Notification, schedule, terms & conditions can be downloaded from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Further details can be had from office of the Undersigned during working hours or KPP Portal help desk - 080-46010000 /080-68948777.

Sd/-
GENERAL MANAGER (Proc)

DIPR/CP/5555/MAA/2025-26

Karnataka Forest Department
Deputy Conservator of Forests, Office of the Forest Mobile Sqaud Bengaluru
Jarakbande Forest Residential Complex, Kammagondanahalli, Bengaluru-560015.
Ph: 080-28387672 | E-Mail: dcffms@gmail.com

No.: KFD/MSB/A2(STR)/2/2026 Date: 17.02.2026
E-Comp. NO.: E 44194

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal only)

The Deputy Conservator of Forests, Forest Mobile Squad, Bengaluru invites tender in two cover system for selection of **"Supply of Digital VHF Repeater Station, Digital VHF Radio Walkie Talkie, Digital VHF Mobile Station, Digital VHF Static Station for Wireless Communication in Bandipur Tiger Reserve Division, Mysuru Division, Mysuru Wildlife Division, Koppa Division, Chikmagalur Division, Shimoga Division, Bhadravathi Division, Sagara Division & Shimoga Wildlife Division"** through e-procurement portal of Government of Karnataka (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in). Prospective bidders willing to participate in this tender shall necessarily register themselves with above mentioned KPP Portal.

	Tender / Bid Details	Tender Reference No and date	Name of the Division	Amount put to Tender (in Lakh)	EMD Amount (in Rs)
1	I.	KFD/2025-26/IND0330 17.02.2026	BANDIPUR TIGER RESERVE DIVISION	96.97	1,93,939
	II.	KFD/2025-26/IND0331 17.02.2026	MYSURU DIVISION	69.43	1,38,860
	III.	KFD/2025-26/IND0332 17.02.2026	MYSURU WILDLIFE DIVISION	65.15	1,30,301
	IV.	KFD/2025-26/IND0333 17.02.2026	KOPPA DIVISION	61.66	1,23,314
	V.	KFD/2025-26/IND0334 17.02.2026	CHIKMAGALUR DIVISION	70.87	1,41,740
	VI.	KFD/2025-26/IND0335 17.02.2026	SHIMOGA DIVISION	70.10	1,40,208
	VII.	KFD/2025-26/IND0336 17.02.2026	BHADRAVATHI DIVISION	69.02	1,38,040
	VIII.	KFD/2025-26/IND0337 17.02.2026	SAGARA DIVISION	88.38	1,76,765
	IX.	KFD/2025-26/IND0338 17.02.2026	SHIMOGA WILDLIFE DIVISION	58.51	1,17,014

2. Date and Time for Pre-bid meeting : **21.02.2026 at 11.00 AM. 3.** Last date & Time for submission of Tender : **24.02.2026 upto 4.00 PM. 4.** Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid : **25.02.2026 at 4.00 PM. 5.** Tentative Date & Time of opening of Commercial Bid: **26.02.2026 at 4.00 PM. 6.** Venue of pre-bid meeting : **Office of the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Vigilance), 2nd Floor, Aranya Bhavan, Malleshwaram, Bangalore-560003. 7.** Opening of tenders & address for communication: **Above Office Address.**

Prospective suppliers willing to participate in this tender can download the bid documents by visiting the web site **https:// kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Deputy Conservator of Forests,
Forest Mobile Squad Benglauru & Tender Inviting Authority.

DIPR/CP/JA/5721/2025-26

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY & DRAINAGE BOARD
O/o The Chief Engineer, Jalabhavan
#P-4, 10 Main, 3rd Cross, 34 Floor, Saraswathipuram, Mysuru-09
Phone: 0821-2545894 E-mail: kwbcemys2014@gmail.com

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Call-4)

Tender for the work of Providing UGD facilities to ward No. 11 & 17 of Pandavapura Town under SCP grants of Pandavapura town for the year 2025-26 (Lumpsum Tender-No Variation) Call-4 is invited vide Indent No. KUWSDB/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT 460/Call-4. For details - **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

DIPR/MYS/1689/SA/2025-26 Sd/- **Chief Engineer**

Bengaluru North City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer, QA/QC Division
Room No.315, 3rd Floor, Mini Vidhana Soudha, Yelahanka, Bengaluru-560 064.

No. EE(QA/QC)Z-2/BNCC/PR/40/2025-26 Date: 17.02.2026

CORRIGENDUM - 01

Sub: Regarding change of dates in Tender Notification
Ref: This Office Tender Notification No.EE/QA/QC/ Z-2/TEND/05/2025-26, Date: 06.02.2026

With reference to the above mentioned subject, due to technical reasons dates have been changed in the tender publication. Receipt of tender date, technical and financial bids opening dates have been postponed and details are as under.

Revised Time Schedule: (1) Pre-bid Meeting: **20.02.2026 at 11:30 a.m. (2)** Last Date & Time for receipt of Tenders: **25.02.2026 upto 4:00 p.m. (3)** Opening of Technical Bid: **26.02.2026 at 4:30 p.m.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, QA/QC Division, Zone-2, BNCC.

ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು & ನೈರ್ಮಲ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರ ಕಚೇರಿ, ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ – ಬಾಯಪಾಸ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಯುನಿಟ್–2, ಫುಡ್ ಪಾರ್ಕ್ ಎದುರಿಗೆ, ಸೆಕ್ಟರ್ ನಂ. 85, 5ನೇ ಅಡ್ಡರಸ್ತೆ, ನವನಗರ, ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ. ದೂ.: 08354–220446, ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ : eerwssdbagalkot@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಗ್ರಾ.ಕು.ನೀ. ಮತ್ತು ನೈ.ವಿ./ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟ/ಪಿಬಿ – 1, 3/ಟೆಂಡರ್/ 2025–26/2282 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 17–02–2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಮಾನ್ಯ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಪರವಾಗಿ **ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ** ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರ, ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು ಮತ್ತು ನೈರ್ಮಲ್ಯ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ ರವರಿಂದ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ **MVS O&M, TTF-4215 MP Fund, JJM - 2215** ಹಾಗೂ **TP FUND** ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಒಟ್ಟು 06 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ವಿವರ ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತಿದೆ.

(ಎ) ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ (Two Cover) 1) **RWSSD/2025-26/WS/ WORK_INDENT9883, APT - 60.38 Lakhs, (MVS O&M Hulyal)** 1) ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರ ಅರ್ಹತೆ : 3ನೇ ದರ್ಜೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ, 2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಬೆಲೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇ.ಎಮ್.ಡಿ. ಮೊತ್ತ : ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪ್ರಕಾರ, 3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **24–02–2026** ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯ ವರೆಗೆ, 4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **26–02–2026** ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ, 5) ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **27–02–2026** ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ. (ಬಿ) ಏಕ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ (Single Cover) - **RWSSD/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT9884, APT - 19.09 Lakhs, (TTF - 4215 Amalazari), 2) RWSSD/2025-26/WS/ WORK_INDENT9885, APT - 5.08 Lakhs, (MP Fund Tungal), 3) RWSSD/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT9886, APT - 6.76 Lakhs, (TTF-4215 Bhairamatti),** 1) ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರ ಅರ್ಹತೆ : 4ನೇ ದರ್ಜೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ, 2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಬೆಲೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇ.ಎಮ್.ಡಿ. ಮೊತ್ತ : ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪ್ರಕಾರ, 3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **24–02–2026** ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ, 4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **26–02–2026** ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ, (ಸಿ) ಏಕ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ (Single Cover) Call-2 Tender 1) **RWSSD/2025-26/WS/WORK_ INDENT9831, APT - 42.86 Lakhs, (JJM - 2215) Call-2, 2) RWSSD/ 2025- 26/WS/WORK_INDENT9841, APT - 10.57 Lakhs, (TP Fund) SC Category Call-2,** 1) ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರ ಅರ್ಹತೆ : 3 & 4ನೇ ದರ್ಜೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ, 2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಬೆಲೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇ.ಎಮ್.ಡಿ. ಮೊತ್ತ : ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪ್ರಕಾರ, 3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **25–02–2026** ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ, 4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **27–02–2026** ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ.

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ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರರು,
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ಡಿಐಪಿಆರ್/ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ/592/ಮಣಿಪಾಲ್/2025–26

Polish army bans Chinese vehicles from military premises

WARSAW (POLAND), AP/PTI: The Polish army has banned Chinese cars from entering military facilities in an effort to prevent the collection of sensitive data by technologically advanced automobiles.

Modern vehicles equipped with cutting-edge sensors and communication systems are capable of the "uncontrolled acquisition and use of data", the Polish army said.

Vehicles are now able to collect video, sound and location data, and there are fears that Chinese manufacturers might share some of this potentially sensitive information with their authorities.

All cars capable of recording location, video and sound will be banned from secure military areas unless those functions are switched off, the army said, meaning that the new restrictions do not apply to Chinese products alone. It is also prohibited to connect official army phones to infotainment systems in any vehicle produced in China. The measures are preventative, the army said.

The army also said it was examining technical solutions that would allow manufacturers of cars with such advanced functions to apply for security clearance, which could potentially be used in the future instead of a blanket ban.

US accuses China of conducting covert nuclear test at Lop Nor

Beijing calls allegation 'political manipulation'

WASHINGTON, REUTERS

A senior US official on Tuesday revealed what he said were new details of an underground nuclear test blast that China allegedly conducted in June 2020.

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Yeaw told an event at the Hudson Institute think tank in Washington that a remote seismic station in Kazakhstan measured an "explosion" of magnitude 2.75 located 450 miles (720 km) away at the Lop Nor test grounds in western China on June 22, 2020.

"I've looked at additional data since then. There is very little possibility, I would say, that it is anything but an explosion, a singular explosion," said Yeaw, adding that the data were not consistent with mining blasts.

"It's also entirely not consistent with an earthquake," said Yeaw, a former intelligence analyst and defence official who holds a doctorate in nuclear engineering. "It is ... what you would expect with a nuclear explosive test."

Spectators look at the DF-5C intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles during a military parade in Beijing. REUTERS FILE

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, which is charged with detecting nuclear test explosions, said that there was insufficient data to confirm Yeaw's allegation with confidence.

A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington said the allegation about China conducting a nuclear test was "entirely unfounded" and an attempt "to fabricate excuses for resuming" US nuclear testing. "This is political manipulation aimed at pursuing nuclear hegemony and evading its own nuclear disarmament responsibilities," Chinese embassy spokesperson Liu Pengyu said in an emailed statement.

"China urges the US to reaffirm the five nuclear-weapon states' commitment to refraining from nuclear tests, uphold the global consensus against nuclear tests, and take concrete steps to safeguard the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime," Liu added. US President Donald Trump is pressing China to join the US and Russia in negotiating a replacement pact to New START, the last US-Russia strategic nuclear arms limitation agreement, which expired on February 5.

The treaty's expiration has fuelled concerns that the world is on the verge of an accelerated nuclear arms race. China, which has signed but not ratified the 1996 international treaty banning nuclear testing, denied setting off an underground nuclear test earlier this month. China's last official underground test took place in 1996.

Russia on Wednesday backed Beijing's claim and said that China had not carried out a secret nuclear test.

China outpaces US in building nuclear submarine

BEIJING, PTI: China has ramped up its production of nuclear-powered submarines over the past five years to the point where it is launching subs faster than the US, threatening to negate a sea-power advantage that has long belonged to Washington, according to a think-tank report.

The build-up in the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) nuclear-powered submarine force includes both ballistic-missile and attack subs, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said.

During the years 2021 to 2025, China's submarine building surpassed that of the US in both numbers of subs launched—10 to 7—and tonnage—79,000 to 55,500, CNN said, quoting the IISS report. China does not disclose fleet numbers.

It is a stark turnaround from the 2016 to 2020 period, when China added only three subs (23,000 tonnes) compared with the US Navy's seven (55,500 tonnes), according to the IISS analysis.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Japan's Prime Minister and Liberal Democratic Party President Sanae Takaichi addresses a news conference at her office in Tokyo on Wednesday. AFP

Takaichi reelected as Japan's PM with goal of pushing to right

▶ Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was reappointed by Parliament on Wednesday to form her second Cabinet, following last week's landslide election win that she hopes will allow a hard-right move to the country's policies, AP/PTI reports from Tokyo.

All previous ministers are expected to be retained. Takaichi will look to use the symbolism of the day, seen as a formality, to further boost her ruling Liberal Democratic Party as it looks to capitalise on a two-thirds supermajority in the lower house, the more powerful of Japan's two parliamentary chambers. Her goals include an increase in military power, more government spending and strengthened conservative social policies. Having two-thirds control of the 465-seat lower house allows Takaichi's party to dominate top posts in house committees and push through bills rejected by the upper house, the chamber where the LDP-led ruling coalition lacks a majority.

Takaichi wants to bolster Japan's military capability and arms sales, tighten immigration policies, push male-only imperial succession rules and preserve a criticised tradition that pressures women into abandoning their surnames.

37 miners killed in Nigeria

▶ At least 37 miners died from carbon-monoxide poisoning while underground at an informal mining site in Nigeria's Plateau state, a police source and security situation report seen by Reuters said on Wednesday, Reuters reports from Maiduguri.

The incident occurred at about 5:45 a.m. on Wednesday at a mining pit in Kampani, a community in Wase, the report said. Another 25 people have been hospitalised. Preliminary findings indicated that the victims, aged 20 to 35, died after inhaling carbon monoxide gas while working underground.

Most mines in Nigeria operate illegally, with little regard for safety standards, and workers typically lack protective equipment.

Soldiers on amphibious vessels take part in Nato's military drill in Putlos, Germany, on Wednesday. AFP

India committed to help Maldives

▶ India assisted the Maldives in building a high-speed ferry, the first among 12, required to begin transport link services between two of the atolls, PTI reports from Male.

India has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Maldives in establishing essential public services and projects that directly benefit communities, Indian High Commissioner to the Maldives G Balasubramaniam was quoted as saying by the state-run PSM News. India will provide 12 high-speed ferries to the Maldives as part of an existing agreement, Balasubramaniam said during a ceremony held to launch Raajje Transport Link services in Faafu and Dhaalu Atolls on Tuesday. India has assisted the Maldives in building the ferry required to begin RTL services in the two atolls.

Peru set for eighth prez in a decade

▶ Peru's Congress is set to name a new president Wednesday—the country's eighth in a decade—after Jose Jeri was impeached on graft allegations barely four months into his term, AFP reports from Lima.

Jeri, 39, became the latest leader to fall victim to a cycle of institutional turmoil as a powerful Congress battles a weakened executive against a backdrop of chronic corruption and rising violence. On Tuesday, he was ousted by lawmakers for suspected involvement in the irregular hiring of women in his government and alleged graft involving a Chinese businessman. He maintains his innocence, but for ordinary Peruvians, the upheaval is just a sideshow to their own daily lives becoming increasingly precarious.

Iran repairing and fortifying N-sites amid US tensions

Experts say activities signal efforts to shield facilities

REUTERS

Satellite images show that Iran has recently built a concrete shield over a new facility at a sensitive military site and covered it with soil, experts say, advancing work at a location reportedly bombed by Israel in 2024 amid tensions with the US.

Images also show that Iran has buried tunnel entrances at a nuclear site bombed by the US during Israel's 12-day war with Iran last year, fortified tunnel entrances near another site, and repaired missile bases struck in the conflict.

They offer a glimpse of Iranian activity at some of the sites at the centre of tensions with Israel and the US, as Washington seeks to negotiate a deal with Tehran on its nuclear programme while threatening military action if talks fail.

A combination satellite images shows Iran's Shiraz South Missile Base before reconstruction on July 3, 2025 (right), and after clearance and rebuilding efforts on January 30, 2026. REUTERS

Iran's nuclear ambitions will be stopped, says US

The US will deter Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons "one way or the other", AFP reports from Paris. US President Donald Trump "believes firmly we cannot have a nuclear-armed Iran," US Energy Secretary Chris Wright said on the sidelines of meetings of the International Energy Agency. "They've been very clear about what they would do with nuclear weapons. It's entirely unacceptable," Wright said. "So one way or the other, we are going to end, deter Iran's march towards a nuclear weapon."

Fire near Tehran

Meanwhile, a fire broke out in Iran's Parand, near the capital city Tehran, state media reported on Wednesday, publishing videos of smoke rising over the area, which is close to several military and strategic sites in Tehran province.

"The black smoke seen near the city of Parand is the result of a fire in the reeds along the Parand riverbank... Firefighters are on site and the fire-extinguishing operation is under way," state media cited the Parand fire department as saying.

Russia-Ukraine war talks end without breakthrough

GENEVA, AP/PTI

The latest US-brokered talks between envoys from Moscow and Kyiv over Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine ended Wednesday with no sign of a breakthrough, with both sides saying the talks were "difficult" as the war's fourth anniversary approaches next week.

The negotiations in Switzerland were the third round of direct talks organised by the US, following meetings earlier this year in Abu Dhabi that officials described as constructive but which also made no major headway.

Expectations for significant progress in Geneva were low. "The negotiations were not easy," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said after the talks broke up. He spoke briefly by phone from Kyiv with his negotiating team. He earlier accused Russia of "trying to drag out negotiations" while pressing on with its invasion—an accusation he and European leaders have repeatedly made.

Despite that, some progress was made on military issues, although political differences remain deep, including over the future of land in eastern Ukraine occupied by the Russian army and which Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to keep, Zelenskyy said.

The head of the Russian delegation, Putin adviser Vladimir Medinsky, told reporters that the two days of talks in Geneva "were difficult but businesslike".

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that it is "too early" to speak about the outcome of the talks. Putin has been receiving reports about progress in Geneva, he said. Both sides said a new round of talks is set to take place. Zelenskyy described the military discussions as "constructive", adding that the armed forces of both countries considered how any future ceasefire might be monitored.

"Monitoring will definitely be carried out with participation of the American side," he said in a voice message shared in a media group chat on WhatsApp.

US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, said on social media that Washington's push for peace in Ukraine over the past year has "brought about meaningful progress".

India–UK team launches AI mental health project for rural girls

LONDON, PTI: Researchers from India and the UK are collaborating on a new £5.3 million project to adapt and scale up an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled digital mental health programme for adolescent girls living in Indian villages.

The international project, unveiled to coincide with the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi this week, involves partners from Imperial College London, the University of Cambridge, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Milaan Foundation, alongside community-based organisations.

The team will work to develop and test the use of an AI chatbot for girls with low mood and anxiety in low-resource settings in rural India.

"This project sits at the intersection of AI, data science, digital health and global mental health equity," said Professor Ceire Costelloe, Imperial College project lead and Chair in Health Informatics at the university's School of Public Health.

"Our role at Imperial is to ensure that AI-enabled interventions are properly evaluated using real-world data and implemented in ways that are ethical, transparent and responsive to local context," she said.

PRECIOUS METAL

Indonesia tightens control on nickel

HANOI, AP/PTI

Indonesia is tightening state control over the world's largest nickel supply after years of betting the metal would anchor a homegrown electric-vehicle industry, and just as global demand begins shifting away from heavy reliance on nickel.

The move could still ripple through global EV supply chains as the United States and China compete for critical minerals.

Indonesia sits at the centre of the nickel market: its share of global supply jumped to about 60 per cent in 2024 from 31.5 per cent in 2020, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, after former President Joko Widodo banned raw ore exports, drawing a surge of Chinese-backed investment into refining.

Jakarta hoped that control over nickel would underpin a fully domestic EV industry, from mining and batteries to finished cars. Experts say that promise was used to justify forest clearing and mining expansion in the name of the energy transition, even as climate risks deepened.

In 2025, Indonesia cracked down on what it called illegal exploitation of natural resources, saying many mining and plantation licenses were tainted by bribery or never properly approved. Authorities say they have seized 4 million hectares of mines, palm oil plantations and processing sites.

But analysts warn the crackdown is coming just as nickel's payoff is starting to fade, with many Chinese EVs shifting to battery chemistries that use far less of the metal, relying instead on iron-based designs.

Parents and family members, including some plaintiffs in the case, embrace before entering the Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday. AFP

Zuckerberg faces questioning at youth addiction trial

LOS ANGELES, REUTERS: Meta Platforms CEO and billionaire Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is set to be questioned for the first time in a US court on Wednesday about Instagram's effect on the mental health of young users, as a landmark trial over youth social media addiction continues.

While Zuckerberg has previously testified on the subject before Congress, the stakes are higher at the jury trial in Los Angeles, California. Meta may have to pay damages if it loses the case, and the verdict could erode Big Tech's longstanding legal defence against claims of user harm.

The lawsuit and others like it are part of a global backlash against social media platforms over children's mental health. Australia has prohibited access to social media platforms for users under the age of 16, and other countries, including Spain, are considering similar curbs. In the US, Florida has prohibited companies from allowing users under the age of 14. Tech industry trade groups are challenging the law in court.

India's stance on Russian oil unchanged: Kremlin

MOSCOW, PTI: Russia's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday said it has "no reason" to believe that India has changed its position on buying Russian oil, which it said is beneficial for both countries and maintains stability in the global energy market.

The remarks came in the backdrop of Washington's claim that New Delhi has agreed to stop importing Russian crude oil.

"We have no reason to believe that India has changed its position on buying Russian hydrocarbons. India's purchase of Russian hydrocarbons benefits both countries and helps maintain stability in the international energy market," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in her weekly briefing.

"There is nothing new in the claims of US President Donald Trump, as well as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who have grabbed the right to dictate to independent nations," Zakharova said. Following a recent phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, both sides announced a reduction of US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent.

The reduction included the removal of a 25 per cent tariff that Trump had slapped on India in August last year for New Delhi's purchase of Russian oil.

Last week, Rubio said that India has committed to stop buying Russian oil, days after New Delhi reiterated that "national interests" will be the "guiding factor" for India's energy procurement.

While announcing the trade deal with New Delhi early in February, Trump had also claimed India had agreed not to procure crude oil from Russia.

India has not yet confirmed or denied Washington's claim that it has committed to stopping the procurement of Russian crude oil. Earlier too, Russia had accused the US of attempting to prevent India and other countries from buying Russian oil.

Actress and producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas and her husband Nick Jonas attend the world premiere of the film "The Bluff" in Los Angeles on Tuesday. REUTERS

AI dvpt should serve humanity without overdependence on few global powers: Macron

Union Health Minister JP Nadda greets French President Emmanuel Macron at AIIMS in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

French prez highlights transformative potential of ethical AI adoption

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Emphasising that AI development serves humanity without overdependence on a few global powers, French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday underscored the need for India and France to build sovereign AI capacity and talent.

In a move to strengthen Indo-French cooperation in healthcare and emerging technologies, Union Health Minister J P Nadda and Macron on Wednesday inaugurated an Indo-French Centre for AI in Health (IF-CAIH) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi.

"India and France are committed to developing the computing capacity and talent necessary to build our own trusted AI systems, as we cannot rely solely on technologies created and managed elsewhere," Macron said.

Emphasising responsible governance, Macron said, "AI must serve humanity – with strong protection for children, transparency in algorithms to address bias, and a firm commitment to preserving linguistic and cultural diversity – areas where India and France share a common vision."

He also highlighted the transformative potential of ethical AI adoption across sectors, particularly in healthcare, to enhance productivity and accelerate scientific discovery.

The IF-CAIH is a pioneering initiative aimed at advancing AI-driven research, medical education and clinical innovation to address complex healthcare challenges.

It marks a significant milestone in India-France collaboration in digital health and reinforces Bharat's vision of becoming a global leader in equitable and technology-enabled healthcare solutions, an official statement said.

The launch coincided with the 'Rencontres Universitaires Et Scientifiques De Haut Niveau' (RUSH), a series of academic and scientific meetings being held at AIIMS Delhi on February 18-19, coordinated by the French Embassy.

A dedicated session titled 'Indo-French Forum: AI in Brain Health and Global Healthcare' brought together leading scientists, clinicians, policymakers and academic leaders from both countries.

The IF-CAIH has been established pursuant to an MoU signed between AIIMS Delhi, Sorbonne University in Paris, and the Paris Brain Institute.

The initiative draws academic collaboration from IIT-Delhi and leading French institutions, promoting interdisciplinary research in AI, brain health and global healthcare systems.

It builds upon the ongoing institutional cooperation between India and France in priority areas such as digital health, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), human resources for health, and responsible use of health data, the statement said.

PM Modi to inaugurate India AI Impact Summit today

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the India AI Impact Summit 2026 on Thursday, which aims to position the country as a leader in the field of artificial intelligence, and envisions a future where the technology advances humanity and fosters inclusive growth.

Modi will also welcome leaders of various participating countries at Bharat Mandapam, the PMO stated on Wednesday, adding that he will also hold bilateral meetings with several world leaders attending the summit, on the sidelines.

Along with Modi, the opening ceremony will be addressed by French President Emmanuel Macron, UN Secretary-General António Guterres and various top global industry leaders. This will be followed by a visit to the India AI Impact Expo 2026.

Record 2.5L AI responsibility pledges logged in 24 hours

NEW DELHI, DHNS: India has successfully achieved the Guinness World Records title for the "Most pledges received for an AI responsibility campaign in 24 hours", Union Minister for Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference here, he said as many as 250,946 valid pledges were received during the 24-hour period.

The nationwide AI Responsibility Pledge campaign, launched under the IndiaAI Mission in collaboration with Intel India on February 16, sought to mobilise citizens across the country to commit to the ethical, inclusive, and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence. The primary idea behind the pledge was to reflect on data privacy, accountability, transparency, and combating misinformation through scenario-based questions.

The pledge is to encourage students to use AI as a tool for the good of society.

Vaishnaw highlighted that the record-setting participation — far-exceeding the initial target of 5,000 pledges — reflects strong public engagement and growing awareness around responsible AI adoption.

Microsoft's five-point strategy to help boost AI in the Global South

- Building the infrastructure needed for AI diffusion
- Empowering people through technology and skills for schools and non-profits
- Strengthening multilingual and multicultural AI capabilities
- Enabling local AI innovations that address community needs
- Measuring AI diffusion to guide future AI policies and investments

Microsoft to invest $50 bn on AI infra in Global South

Proposed spend includes $17.5 bn announced for India

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Microsoft on Wednesday said it will invest $50 billion by the end of the decade to expand artificial intelligence (AI) access across countries in the Global South, including India.

According to Microsoft's Vice Chair and President Brad Smith, the proposed investment includes $17.5 billion announced for India.

"We need to bring the infrastructure that the Global South needs — that means data centres, connectivity and electricity. That's why Satya Nadella (Microsoft CEO) announced that Microsoft would be spending $17 billion in India. It's why we're on pace to spend $50 billion by the end of the decade bringing AI here," Smith said at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

In December last year, Nadella announced that Microsoft would invest $17.5 billion in India between 2026 and 2029 to advance the country's cloud and AI infrastructure, skilling and other operations. This is in addition to the $3-billion investment announced in January last year.

In its latest AI Diffusion report, Microsoft noted that AI adoption in the Global North is roughly twice that of the Global South and the gap is widening.

"This disparity impacts not only national and regional economic growth, but whether AI can deliver on its broader promise of expanding opportunity and prosperity around the world," it said.

The India AI Impact Summit has rightly placed this challenge at the centre of its agenda. For more than a century, unequal access to electricity exacerbated a growing economic gap between the Global North and South. Unless we act with urgency, a growing AI divide will perpetuate this disparity in the century ahead, it said.

A stall of Microsoft at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. REUTERS

"If AI is deployed broadly and used well by a young and growing population, it offers a real prospect for catch-up economic growth for the Global South. It might even provide the biggest such opportunity of the 21st century," noted the report co-authored by Smith and Vice-President and Chief Responsible AI Officer of Microsoft, Natasha Crampton.

Microsoft outlined a five-point strategy to help boost AI in the Global South. It includes building the infrastructure needed for AI diffusion; empowering people through technology and skills for schools and non-profits; strengthening multilingual and multicultural AI capabilities; enabling local AI innovations that address community needs; and measuring AI diffusion to guide future AI policies and investments.

For AI to diffuse broadly and deliver meaningful impact across regions, several conditions matter. "As a company, we are focused on the need for accessible AI infrastructure, systems that work reliably in real-world contexts, and technologies that can be applied toward local challenges and opportunities. Microsoft is committed to working with partners to advance this work, including sharing data to track progress," the report said.

L&T and Nvidia to build India's largest GW-scale AI factory

BENGALURU, DHNS

Larsen & Toubro (L&T), on Wednesday, announced its plans to build a sovereign, scalable Gigawatt-scale Nvidia AI factory infrastructure to reinforce India's position as a global AI powerhouse. The partnership, aimed at India's enterprises, policymakers and industry leaders seeking production-grade AI capacity, is anchored in India's digital and industrial transformation, the company said in a statement.

It plans to develop a gigawatt-scale AI data centre factory, providing AI-ready capacity for high-density, next-generation workloads so customers can expand in India. It will scale Nvidia GPU cluster deployment at its Chennai DC up to 30 MW capacity in its 300 acres Gigawatt scalable campus and at the new 40 MW Datacentre in Mumbai currently under execution.

The AI factory model will deliver advanced AI services to global off takers, hyperscalers & India Inc, including manufacturing, infrastructure, energy, financial services, healthcare, and public services, moving from experimentation to production-scale deployment.

"With Nvidia's platforms and L&T's execution strength, we are building infrastructure that will enable AI to deliver measurable economic impact", Chairman & Managing Director, L&T, S N Subrahmanyan said.

Integrating L&T's engineering with NVIDIA AI infrastructure, including NVIDIA GPUs, CPUs, and the Nvidia AI Enterprise software stack, it aims to enable rapid, secure AI adoption.

Jensen Huang, Founder and CEO of Nvidia, said, "Prime Minister Modi has outlined a bold vision to democratise AI access across the Global South and position India as a global hub for digital infrastructure. Together with L&T, we are laying the foundation for world-class AI infrastructure that will help realise the full vision of India AI".

AI takes centre-stage in India's online travel market

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a push to enhance experiential travel and move beyond conventional search-led discovery, tech-driven travel companies are leveraging AI.

MakeMyTrip and ixigo have announced collaborations with US-based AI major OpenAI, against the backdrop of the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

Accordingly, MakeMyTrip plans to deepen AI-led travel discovery and capture high-intent queries through the partnership. The company is integrating OpenAI's APIs into its app to enable users to move seamlessly from conversational inspiration to booking via its Myra interface. The move positions MakeMyTrip at the centre of AI-driven travel planning, shifting from passive search visibility to active participation in conversational discovery.

"Our collaboration with OpenAI ensures that when travellers begin their journey through conversation, MakeMyTrip becomes a seamless extension of that process. Anchored in our proprietary travel data, AI can move beyond inspiration to deliver personalised, bookable outcomes at scale," said Rajesh Magow, Co-Founder and Group CEO, MakeMyTrip.

Meanwhile, ixigo's expanded collaboration with OpenAI aims to scale AI deployment across ixigo, ConfirmTkt and Abhibus platforms. The company will use OpenAI's Enterprise APIs to integrate advanced AI tools and next-generation coding models across its technology stack, enabling autonomous workflows, AI-driven assistants and new customer use cases.

"We have been an early mover on AI since 2012, and are now entering an era where every company must become an AI diffusion company," said Aloke Bajpai, Group CEO, ixigo.

Gnani.ai unveils text-to-speech 'Vachana TTS'

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Agentic AI and Voice Infrastructure firm Gnani.ai, which is building foundational voice models and systems for enterprises and governments, on Wednesday announced the launch of Vachana TTS, a foundational text-to-speech model delivering human-quality speech synthesis with zero-shot voice cloning capability across 12 Indic languages.

Vachana TTS is the second model released under Inya VoiceOS, as part of the India AI Mission. Many AI startups at the India AI Impact Summit demonstrated their new features and products. Gnani.ai is one of four companies selected under the India AI Mission to build sovereign foundational AI models for national-scale deployment.

Vachana TTS supports 12 Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, the company said. It enables zero-shot voice cloning using less than 10 seconds of reference speaker audio, it further said, adding that the model is built for low-bandwidth networks and high-concurrency production environments.

Built, trained, and deployed entirely within India, all training data and voice models remain in Indian data centres, ensuring compliance with data localisation requirements, the company said.

Meanwhile, the expo spread across 10 pavilions remained a major attraction on Day 3, witnessing participation from industry leaders, startups, institutions, government representatives, and citizens. A large number of youth and students were seen at the exhibition area.

Health AI devices boost clinical insights, diagnostic speed

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

AI is transforming the healthcare sector as several startups showcased their AI tools at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, demonstrating how the technologies provide doctors, hospitals, and patients with realtime clinical insights to faster diagnosis and accurate treatment.

Some companies showcased their tools which they claim assist radiologists in quickly identifying abnormalities in MRI, CT scans, and other imaging reports.

Some startups also presented solutions for pharma firms, including support for electronic batch records (eBR), realtime analytics, and process deviation monitoring. AI-powered tools and devices were prominently showcased for faster, more accurate diagnostics, including AI-assisted screening for tuberculosis, diabetic retinopathy, cancers, and heart conditions. Handheld AI-enabled devices like AI stethoscopes for heart sound analysis and smart X-ray tools that empower community health workers for doorstep screening were also exhibited.

Others demonstrated AI-based scanning systems that provide doctors with realtime information, enabling faster disease detection. In surgical settings, AI models offer precise guidance to surgeons, helping reduce errors and improve outcomes.

Jaipur-based Transformer Neural Scan Quest (TNSQAI) showcased its TruScan AI tool, which assists radiologists in interpreting MRI and CT scan reports faster, while ensuring precision.

"Our vision is to build a robust, future-ready ecosystem of medical AI assistive tools that deliver unmatched accuracy, reliability, and cost efficiency," said TNSQAI CMO Bedabrata Das.

Gurugram-based PV Analytica presented a tool designed to address cost-intensive processes such as language translation, narrative writing, and medical documentation.

Qualcomm to aid AI expansion in India

NEW DELHI, PTI: Global chip major Qualcomm Incorporated plans to invest up to $150 million, or about Rs 1,360 crore, to support India's rapidly expanding technology and AI startup ecosystem, the company said on Wednesday.

The investments will be deployed through Qualcomm Ventures and will be made in startups across all stages, with a particular focus on AI for automotive, IoT, robotics, and mobile, the company specified. The announcement coincides with Qualcomm CEO Cristiano Amon's participation in the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

'India a quantum mission, not a late starter'

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India is no longer the late starter or late initiator, as we are among the few countries that have a dedicated national quantum mission, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh told *DH*.

Speaking on the sidelines of a session on Sovereign Models: A story of vision and technical execution 2026, the minister said India is already into deep tech and has dedicated schemes.

"Quantum is deep tech and we are among the few countries that have a dedicated National Quantum Mission (NQM). We are also among the few countries that have a dedicated exclusive biotechnology policy called the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment)," the minister said, adding that the country is no longer the late starter.

Dr Jitendra Singh

He further said the AI Impact Summit has given the country a huge geopolitical boost.

BharatGen has launched a 17-billion-parameter multilingual AI model, called Param2. The minister said the model will support 22 Indian languages. At the session, hosted by BharatGen in association with the IndiaAI Mission, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), as part of the Global AI Summit, he said AI is no longer an option, but an essential component of working in every sphere of life.

The minister also said the initiative represents a significant milestone in India's journey towards technological self-reliance. While large language models (LLMs) are known globally, he noted that BharatGen's distinct feature lies in its sovereign, government-supported character, reflecting a proactive policy approach at an early stage of technological evolution.

Calling for a change in mindset across public and private sectors, the minister said that emerging technologies such as AI require collaborative approaches rather than siloed functioning.

Nissan drives in GRAVITE at Rs 5.6L

BENGALURU, DHNS: Nissan Motor India on Wednesday announced the launch of the all-new seven-seater MPV, 'GRAVITE', at an introductory price of Rs 5.65 Lakh (ex-showroom).

"Inspired by India, Made in India, Made for India, the GRAVITE is the first product to roll out under Nissan Motor India's renewed product offensive — underlining the company's strengthened commitment and presence in India," the Japanese automaker said in a statement.

India expected to add $26 tn to economy: Goyal

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said that between now and 2047, India is expected to add approximately $26 trillion to its economy.

"This is a scale of growth opportunity that is unparalleled in history and unlikely to be replicated anywhere else in the world," said Goyal on the second day of the Global Economic Cooperation (GEC) 2026 conference in Mumbai.

Piyush Goyal

"The era of economic isolation is over — this is why we are building alliances, deepening friendships, and concluding trade agreements from a position of strength — nine agreements in four years, with more to come," he said.

"An FTA, for us, is an invitation to partner in India's future, to participate in a journey that will take India from the world's fourth-largest economy today, to the third largest by 2027-28, and ultimately to a $30-35 trillion developed nation by 2047. The world wants to be part of this story. And India, open, trusted and growing, is ready to welcome every partner who comes to the table in sincerity," said Goyal.

Organised by the Future Economic Cooperation Council in cooperation with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Government of Maharashtra, GEC 2026 brings together senior ministerial and business delegations from across the world to shape practical frameworks for resilient and future-ready economic cooperation.

Noting that India now has concluded pacts with 39 developed nations, Goyal attributed this success to a clear and disciplined national purpose. "India has concluded nine agreements between 2022 and now. These agreements were negotiated from a position of strength, with an objective of a win-win situation to both sides. Partner nations have accepted India's position, because we have been honest and transparent about our objectives," he said.

Goyal added that while safeguarding the growth of MSMEs, protecting fishermen, and preserving jobs in India, the FTAs have at the same time secured market access in textiles, footwear and leather, expanding pharma exports and have enhanced opportunities for farm and marine product exports, and attracted technology and investment.

APSEZ, Port of Marseille Fos ink pact

MUMBAI, DHNS: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) has signed an MoU with the Port of Marseille Fos, France's leading port — a development that would deepen cooperation on trade facilitation, port innovation, and energy transition by strengthening the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

The MoU was signed coinciding with the Mumbai bilateral talks on Tuesday evening between PM Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron. Through this MoU, Marseille Fos, one of Europe's largest integrated multi-modal port ecosystems, strengthens the western European gateway of the corridor, adding approximately 70 million tonnes of capacity and extending IMEC's reach deeper into Europe.

Launched at the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi, the IMEC is a 6,000-km multimodal connectivity initiative linking India and Europe through integrated maritime routes, rail networks, digital systems and clean energy pathways.

India overpower spirited Dutch

Dube to the fore as hosts end group stage with all-win record

Shivam Dube (left) and Hardik Pandya forged a 76-run stand off 35 balls for the fifth wicket to lift India's score past 190 against the Netherlands in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. PTI

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

A passionate Netherlands brought the fight to the table as promised, but the overall might of the Indians proved too much for them as the defending champions roared to yet another polished win in their final Group A fixture of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

The Associate Nation, playing India for the second time in the T20I game, surprisingly held the hosts' star-studded batting line-up on a tight leash for nearly three quarters of their innings with dogged bowling and disciplined fielding that had the 68,000 turnout at the gigantic Narendra Modi Stadium quiet for most of the time.

Shivam Dube, arriving on the back of an exceptional series against New Zealand last month where he unveiled another dimension to his game that has substantially elevated his stock, gave voice to the crowd with a momentum-shifting 66 off 31 balls. His sensational assault at the death, containing four boundaries and six mammoth sixes, powered India to a huge 193/6 in 20 overs that looked completely out of bounds until five overs remaining.

On a somewhat sluggish surface where even a majority of the Indian batters struggled to force the pace, the Netherlands were always going to find the chase almost impossible considering the quality of the bowling they were up against. Their top-order comprising Michael Levitt (24), Max O'Dowd (20), Bas de Leede (33) and Colin Ackermann (23) all got starts but could not go on to make a big score, the Dutch managing to reach 176/7.

Spinner Varun Chakravarthy continued to impress with 3/14 while the rest of his colleagues were also on the mark in another good day in the office for the bowling unit. Dube had a fine night with the ball too, bagging 2/35.

Despite the defeat, the Dutch can take joy from the fact that they were able to go toe-to-toe against an intimidating Indian batting line-up. Off-spinner Aryan Dutt (2/19) scalped out-of-sorts Abhishek Sharma for a three-ball duck in the opening over itself. It was the opener's fifth duck in eight innings, and the dejection was visible on his face after a wild slog uprooted his leg stump.

Dutt was completely pumped up and he delivered a fine spell in the powerplay, stifling Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma by bowling slower through the air. Not just him but the rest of his colleagues too bowled to a plan -- consistently taking the pace off the ball and keeping it a tad wide. As much as Kishan, Tilak Varma, and skipper Suryakumar Yadav tried, they could only find the odd boundary but couldn't break free. Such was the struggle, India limped to 74/3 in 10 overs. Between overs 8.6 and 11.5, India didn't score a single boundary, Netherlands fielding and bowling like Tigers.

Suryakumar snapped that snag with a cracking six off Bas de Leede in the final ball of the 12th over. His fellow Mumbaikar Dube then pressed on the accelerator by creaming off-spinner Colin Ackerman for two sixes and a boundary as 19 runs came in the 13th over.

With his eye in and seeing the ball like a football, Dube took the Dutch bowlers to the cleaners at the death, littering the sprawling park with an array of boundaries and sixes with his trademark pulls and blistering shots down the ground. Seeing Dube, Pandya got his juices flowing too as the all-rounder unleashed three sixes in a 21-ball 30. The duo's 76-run stand off 35 balls for the fifth wicket turned the tide in India's way and the Men In Blue chugged along smoothly thereafter for their fourth win on the trot in the tournament.

SCORE BOARD

INDIA

Abhishek b Dutt	0 (3b)
Kishan b Dutt	18 (7b, 2x4, 1x6)
Varma c der Merwe b Van Beek	31 (27b, 3x4, 1x6)
Suryakumar c der Gugten b Klein	34 (28b, 2x4, 1x6)
Dube c sub b Van Beek	66 (31b, 4x4, 6x6)
Pandya c der Merwe b Van Beek	30 (21b, 3x4)
Rinku (not out)	6 (3b, 1x6)
Extras (B-1, W-7)	8
TOTAL (for 6 wkts, 20 overs)	**193**

Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Abhishek), 2-39 (Kishan), 3-69 (Varma), 4-110 (Suryakumar), 5-186 (Dube), 6-193 (Pandya).

Bowling: Dutt 4-0-19-2, Van Beek 4-0-56-3 (w-2), Ackermann 3-0-36-0 (w-1), Klein 4-0-38-1 (w-2), De Leede 4-0-28-0 (w-2), Der Merwe 1-0-15-0.

NETHERLANDS

Levitt c Sundar b Pandya	24 (23b, 4x4)
O'Dowd b Varun	20 (18b, 2x4, 1x6)
De Leede c Varun b Dube	33 (23b, 3x4, 1x6)
Ackermann c Rinku b Varun	23 (15b, 1x4, 2x6)
Dutt b Varun	0 (1b)
Edwards b Bumrah	15 (10b, 2x4)
Lion-Cachet c Sundar b Dube	26 (16b, 1x4, 1x6)
Croes (not out)	25 (12b, 5x4)
Van Beek (not out)	4 (2b, 1x4)
Extras (LB-2, W-4)	6
TOTAL (for 7 wkts, 20 overs)	**176**

Fall of wickets: 1-35 (O'Dowd), 2-51 (Levitt), 3-94 (Ackermann) 4-94 (Dutt), 5-112 (De Leede), 6-125 (Edwards), 7-172 (Lion-Cachet).

Bowling: Arshdeep 3-0-22-0, Bumrah 3-0-17-1 (w-1), Sundar 4-0-36-0, Varun 3-0-14-3 (w-1), Pandya 3-0-40-1 (w-1), Abhishek 1-0-10-0, Dube 3-0-35-2.

Result: India won 17 runs.
PoM: Shivam Dube.
India's next match: Vs South Africa (Feb 22, Ahmedabad).

Australian bowlers, selectors under fire after early exit

Campaign has been attacked as 'shambolic'

SYDNEY, AFP

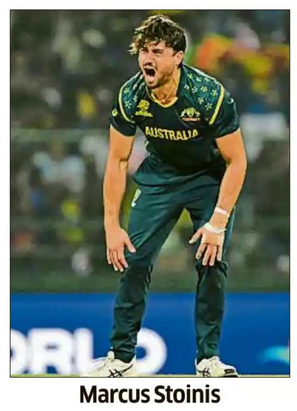
Critics hammered Australia's bowling line-up and selection "stuff-ups" after the country's shock T20 World Cup exit in the group stages.

The 2021 champions were knocked out of the T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka on Tuesday. Zimbabwe qualified after their match against Ireland was rained off without a ball being bowled.

The washout gave each side one point, and left Australia unable to catch up. Their campaign has been widely attacked as "shambolic".

Australia lost leading pace bowlers Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to injury, while captain Mitchell Marsh missed the first two games after being hit in the groin in training and suffering testicular bleeding.

Their pace attack has been a "shadow of former glories" without Hazlewood, Cummins or Mitchell Starc, who has retired from the format internationally, The Australian newspaper said. Looking back on happier days, the paper recalled that Australia won five and drew one in their six T20 internationals from September 2024 to October 2025.



Marcus Stoinis

"The trouble is that a host of players who had been central to those series wins have fallen off a cliff when the stakes are at their highest."

'Lamb to the slaughter'

It cited "major drops" in output by Cameron Green, Tim David, Josh Inglis, Xavier Bartlett and Ben Dwarshuis, with series losses against India and Pakistan.

The paper attacked selection "stuff-ups", too, criticising the inclusion of Cooper Connolly as being like "throwing a lamb to the slaughter".

Test great Steve Smith was left out despite being in terrific form top of the order in the Big Bash League and his expertise in playing against spin bowling.

He flew in as cover last week and was formally added to the Australia squad at the weekend, after their surprise loss to Zimbabwe on Friday.

"We still haven't had a compelling answer as to why he wasn't yet in Colombo for the match against Zimbabwe, five days after Marsh was injured in the nets," The Australian said.

Then Smith was left out for the must-win game against Sri Lanka on Monday which saw an Australia middle-order collapse as they lost by eight wickets.

"We don't have that bowling depth, and that's really shown," former Australian cricketer Brad Hogg told British sports radio Talksport. "We really weren't prepared enough for this particular World Cup, and we probably deserve what we've got at this stage."

Selectors and coaching staff will likely be under pressure over Australia's performance, Hogg said.

"They've got to plan. They've got to look at their depth of bowling here in Australia, especially when we lose Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc. What's our next generation going to look (like) -- that's probably going to be the big question."

Ponting rues lack of aura in Aussies' T20 squad

NEW DELHI, PTI: Former captain Ricky Ponting says the current Australian side lacked the aura that defined its past teams at global events and termed the country's early exit from the men's T20 World Cup as a "really poor campaign".

Ricky Ponting

Speaking on the latest episode of the ICC Review, Ponting said the team on paper did not carry the same presence as previous Australian outfits that dominated ICC tournaments.

"You look at that Australian team on paper, it just doesn't look to have that sort of aura around it that a lot of other Australian teams have going into ICC events and World Cups," Ponting said. "You need to have your best players and your most experienced players standing up and winning big moments for you in these tournaments."

SA romp past UAE to end group stage unbeaten

NEW DELHI, PTI: Dewald Brevis warmed up nicely with some monstrous sixes as South Africa hardly broke sweat during a walk-in-the-park six-wicket victory over United Arab Emirates in their final group league fixture of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

Chasing a target of 123, the Proteas romped home in 13.1 overs with Aiden Markram smashing 28 off 11 balls to set the stage for young Brevis who also helped himself to a 36 off 25 balls.

Ryan Rickleton hit some lusty sixes to get 30 off 16 balls in an all-round effort.

With the big Super Eights match against India coming up on Sunday, South Africa needed Brevis to fire, and he did have a good session out there in the middle. The pull off a bouncer sent down by wrong-footed left-arm seamer Muhammad Jawadullah was a treat for the eyes.

Brevis quickly went onto the backfoot and pulled it from above eyeline into the top tier of the square leg stand. When left-arm spinner Haider Ali tossed one outside the off-stump, Brevis thumped it over extra cover.

Brief scores: UAE: 122/6 in 20 overs (Alishan Sharafu 45, Anrich Nortje 2-28, Corbin Bosch 3-12) lt to South Africa: 123/4 in 13.2 overs (Aiden Markram 28, Ryan Rickelton 30, Dewald Brevis 36). **Result:** South Africa won by 6 wkts. **PoM:** Corbin Bosch.

Clinical West Indies take on spirited Italy in dead rubber

KOLKATA, PTI: Two-time champions West Indies will look to fine-tune their combination and deliver yet another clinical performance when they take on spirited debutants Italy in their final Group C match of the T20 World Cup, here on Thursday.

Though the Caribbean side has slumped since its second and last T20 World Cup triumph at this very venue a decade ago, it is beginning to peak at the right time in this edition.

As the business end approaches, the Darren Sammy-coached outfit appears to be finding rhythm for a demanding Super Eights schedule.

West Indies will face Zimbabwe in Mumbai on February 23, South Africa in Ahmedabad on February 26, before returning here for a marquee clash against cohosts and title favourites India on March 1.

With that decisive fixture also at Eden Gardens, the Caribbean side would be keen to stamp authority and build momentum at a venue that has historically been kind to it.

Skipper Shai Hope (**in pic**) has rediscovered touch at the top just in time.

After modest returns of 0 against England, and 19 versus Scotland, the opener responded with a fluent 44-ball 61 not out to steer a nine-wicket chase against Nepal in their previous outing.

Shimron Hetmyer has provided solidity and power in the middle-order and struck a 64 in their tournament-opener against Scotland at this venue.

LIVE 11 AM, STAR SPORTS

SL, Zim to battle for bragging rights

COLOMBO, PTI: Surprise package Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka will battle for bragging rights when they clash in a compelling T20 World Cup fixture here on Thursday, with both teams having already secured their spots in the Super 8s.

The outcome of this match will determine the group topper. Sri Lanka have emerged as strong contenders, leveraging their knowledge of local conditions to defeat Oman and Ireland, while crushing Australia by eight wickets to establish themselves as a well-rounded side with the potential to go all the way.

Zimbabwe, on the other hand, claimed their spot in the Super 8s thanks to their win over Australia and the weather.

LIVE 3 PM

Pakistan progress riding on Sahibzada century

COLOMBO, PTI

Pakistan rode on Sahibzada Farhan's scintillating, maiden hundred and their spinners' excellent display to beat Namibia by a handsome margin of 102 runs and enter the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup here Wednesday.

Batting first, Pakistan posted a formidable 199 for three in their must-win game.

Farhan, who needed just 20 deliveries to move from 50 to 100, ended on 100 not out off 58 balls, becoming only the second player from Pakistan to score a century in the tournament after Ahmed Shehzad's ton against Bangladesh in 2014 at Mirpur.

In all, Farhan hit 11 boundaries and four sixes while adding 67 runs with skipper Salman Agha (38 off 23 balls) and 81 runs with Shadab Khan (36 not out off 22 balls).

In reply, Namibia were all out for 97 in 17.3 overs with mystery spinner Usman Tariq (4/16 in 3.3 overs) and leg-spinner Shadab Khan (3/19 in 4 overs) leading Pakistan's charge with the ball, picking up four and three wickets respectively.

Salman Mirza and Mohammad Nawaz chipped in with a wicket each as Namibia fared miserably in the chase to finish their campaign winless after four outings. With this win, Pakistan have also ensured their qualification to the next edition of the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand in 2028.

Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan celebrates his century against Namibia in Colombo on Wednesday. AP/PTI

This is also Pakistan's biggest margin of victory in the T20 showpiece.

Earlier, Pakistan managed 47 runs in the powerplay for the loss of Saim Ayub's (14 off 12 balls) wicket.

Seeking to recover from the heavy defeat to traditional rivals India, Pakistan strengthened their batting with the inclusion of Khawaja Nafay in the middle order while leaving out the woefully out-of-sorts pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi.

While the team did get the occasional boundaries, their approach was far from ideal as they resorted to defensive batting, which pretty much explained why they were 55 for one after overs at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

However, skipper Salman Agha broke the shackles at the start of the ninth overs with a six off Willem Myburgh, the batter coming down the track to smack one over long-on.

Taking a cue from his captain, Farhan launched into leg-spinner Myburgh for a big six over deep mid-wicket, and then, sent his tossed up googly soaring over the same region in a similar fashion, using the slog sweep to good effect on both occasion.

Brief scores: Pakistan: 199/3 in 20 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 100, Salman Agha 38, Shadab Khan 36 n.o.; Jack Brassell 2-48) bt Namibia: 97 all out in 17.3 overs (Shadab Khan 3-19, Usman Tariq 4-16). Result: Pakistan won by 97 runs. **PoM:** Sahibzada Farhan.

SUPER 8s & KNOCKOUTS

Feb 21	
• New Zealand vs Pakistan (Colombo)	
Feb 22	
• Sri Lanka vs England (Kandy)	
• **India vs South Africa (Ahmedabad)**	
Feb 23	
• Zimbabwe vs West Indies (Mumbai)	
Feb 24	
• England vs Pakistan (Pallekele)	
Feb 25	
• Sri Lanka vs New Zealand (Colombo)	
Feb 26	
• West Indies vs South Africa (Ahmedabad)	
• **India vs Zimbabwe (Chennai)**	
Feb 27	
• England vs New Zealand (Colombo)	
Feb 28	
• Sri Lanka vs Pakistan (Kandy)	
Mar 1	
• Zimbabwe vs South Africa (Delhi)	
• **India vs West Indies (Kolkata)**	

Mar 4: I Semifinal (Kolkata/Colombo) | **Mar 5: II Semifinal** (Mumbai) | **Mar 8: Final** (Ahmedabad/Colombo)

All matches start at 7.00 pm IST except on a double-header day when the first match starts at 3.00 pm

LIVE: STAR SPORTS NETWORK AND JIOHOTSTAR

Afghans, Canada play for pride

CHENNAI, PTI: Eliminated despite captivating the crowds with their resilience and spirited play, Afghanistan and Canada will square off in their final T20 World Cup fixture here on Thursday, seeking to finish on a high note and leave a lasting impression.

Afghanistan wowed fans during the unforgettable double Super Over thriller against South Africa in Ahmedabad where they suffered a heartbreaking loss.

Canada were fuelled by the determination of teenager Yuvraj Samra, who captured the cricketing world's attention with his remarkable feat in Chennai, where he became the youngest ever to score a T20 century.

LIVE 7 PM

In their bid to bow out on a high, Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan (**in pic**) will rely on his trusted top-order batters -- Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, and Gulbadin Naib -- who have yet to fire together in the World Cup, with their individual struggles being one of the key reasons for the team's failure to advance.

Gurbaz's explosive 42-ball 84 against South Africa and Naib's 63 against New Zealand were among the few bright sparks from the Afghan batting lineup, and the hope now is that they can click together against a Canadian side that plays on instincts.

Racial abuse of Vinicius mars Madrid win; PSG rally to beat Monaco

PARIS, AFP

Vinicius Junior scored and then alleged he had been racially abused during Real Madrid's 1-0 win away to Benfica in the first leg of their Champions League play-off tie on Tuesday, while Paris Saint-Germain came from two goals down to beat Monaco 3-2.

Elsewhere, Galatasaray stunned Juventus, beating the Italians 5-2 in Istanbul, and Borussia Dortmund seized the upper hand in their tie against Atalanta with a 2-0 first-leg win.

Madrid headed to Lisbon to play Benfica less than three weeks after a dramatic 4-2 defeat away to the same opponents, when goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin scored a stunning late goal to take the Portuguese side through to the knock-out stages and force Real to drop into the play-offs.

Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr (centre) claimed he was racially abused by a Benfica player during a Champions League match. REUTERS

The night was instead overshadowed by the alleged racist abuse reported by Vinicius.

The Brazilian scored a superb goal early in the second half, arrowing his shot into the top corner. His moment of brilliance, though, quickly became controversial when he was booked for his dancing celebration in front of the crowd.

That booking sparked an exchange with Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni, who pulled his shirt over his mouth before appearing to say something to Vinicius.

The Real forward then ran over to referee Francois Letexier and, pointing at Prestianni, seemed to claim he had been called "mono", the Spanish word for monkey.

That led to a hold-up of several minutes before the game resumed, with Vinicius then being jeered by the home fans.

Mourinho was then sent off in the final stages of a spiky game for complaining too vociferously as he appealed for a second yellow card for Vinicius, meaning he will not be on the touchline for the second leg at the Bernabeu next week.

The long stoppage led to 12 minutes of added-on time, but Benfica could not use them to find an equaliser, and face an uphill struggle in the Spanish capital next week.

UEFA meanwhile said on Wednesday it would "investigate allegations of discriminatory behaviour".

Results: Knockout phase play-offs (first leg): Galatasaray: 5 (Gabriel Sara 15th, Lang 49th, 75th, Sanchez 60th, Boey 86th) bt Juventus: 2 (Koopmeiners 16th, 32nd); Benfica: 0 lt to Real Madrid: 1 (Vinicius 50th); Borussia Dortmund: 2 (Guirassy 3rd, Beier 42nd) bt Atalanta: 0; Monaco: 2 (Balogun 1st, 18th) lt to PSG: 3 (Doue 29th, 67th, Hakimi 41st).

India eye T20 series win

CANBERRA, PTI

Aiming to establish an unassailable lead over Australia, Harmanpreet Kaur's India would draw confidence from a strong bowling performance in the rain-hit opening win when the two sides square off in the second and penultimate T20 International here on Thursday.

It was a commanding display from seamer Arundhati Reddy, whose four-wicket haul rattled the hosts and spearheaded a superb bowling effort as Australia were unable to bat out their 20 overs and were bundled out for a below-par 133.

Arundhati Reddy

LIVE 1:45 PM STAR SPORTS

The bowlers enjoyed a solid workout as the long series, also featuring three ODIs and a one off Test, unfolded.

On the batting front, only openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma managed meaningful time in the middle as rain played spoilsport and the match was decided by the Duckworth-Lewis System, leaving the rest of the batting unit potentially a touch under-prepared.

But given India's formidable batting line-up, there is little concern about a failure as they carry ample game time into the contest.

Karnataka women in last 8 despite loss

BENGALURU, DHNS: Despite a second defeat in a row, this time against Puducherry, Karnataka managed to enter the quarterfinal of the BCCI Senior Women's One-Day Trophy on Wednesday.

Following a loss to group A toppers Maharashtra in their previous outing, the S Shubha-led side went down by 46 runs to Puducherry in their final group match at the Sansora Cricket Ground in Rajkot.

Batting first, Yuvashri's 85 and Divya Gnanananda's 65 helped Puducherry post 253 for six in 50 overs. With Karnataka's top and middle-order falling apart, Shreya S Chavan's unbeaten 68-ball 54 at no. 8 was the lone bright spot in a lost cause.

Though both Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh ended with 20 points each (five wins and two losses), the former advanced due to a superior net run rate. Karnataka are set to meet Group C toppers Railways next in Mohali on February 23.

Brief scores: Puducherry: 253/6 in 50 overs (Yuvashri 85, Divya Gnanananda 65, SA Lonkar 39; Monica C Patel 2-42) bt Karnataka: 207 all out in 47.2 overs (Roshini Kiran 28, Soumya Verma 39, Shreya S Chavan 54 n.o.; M Revathi 2-36).

IN BRIEF

CK Nayudu: Karnataka retain squad

▸ Karnataka have retained the squad, which played their final two group matches, for the Col CK Nayudu Trophy quarterfinal match against Mumbai to be played at the Sachin Tendulkar Gymkhana, Kandivali from February 21-24.

Squad: Aneeshwar Gautam (captain), Prakhar Chaturvedi, Faizan Khan (WK), KP Karthikeya, Dhruv Prabhakar (vice-captain), Harshil Dharmani, Hardik Raj, Yashovardhan Parantap, Manvanth Kumar L, Dhanush Gowda, Samit Dravid, Karthik SU, Shashikumar K, Sanjay Ashwin (WK), Monish Reddy. **Coach**: Ganesh Satish; **Assistant coach**: Deepak Chougule; **Manager**: S Babu; **S&C coach**: Kiran A; **Physiotherapist**: Vijay Mudgal; **Performance analyst**: Kiran Kudtarkar; **Masseur**: Shantinath Patil.

EFI: court orders fresh polls

▸ The Delhi High Court on Wednesday ordered fresh elections for Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) and also called for the constitution of an independent ad-hoc administrative committee to oversee its functioning, reports PTI from New Delhi.

The matter was listed at Item No. 4 before Court 14 presided over by Justice Kaurav, who was hearing an application filed by the Union of India seeking the appointment of an ad-hoc administrative committee to administer the affairs of the EFI.

Russian flag, anthem return

▸ Russian athletes will compete under their own flag at the Paralympics for the first time in more than a decade, and the country's national anthem will be played for any gold medalists, reports AP from Milan.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

T20 WC: West Indies vs Italy **(11 am)**, Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe **(3 pm)**, Afghanistan vs Canada **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

2nd T20 Women: Australia vs India **(1:45 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

Ranji Trophy semis: Uttarakhand vs Karnataka **(Day 5, 9:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Khel, JioHotstar.**

TENNIS

ATP 500: Rio Open **(round of 16, 12:30 am, Friday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

ATP 500: Qatar Open **(quarterfinals, 3 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

FORMULA 1

Pre-Season Testing: Day 2 **(12:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

OTHERS

Winter Olympics: Day 13 **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar.**

CRICKET RANJI TROPHY

J&K end 67-year wait, enter final

Ajay Sharma-coached side stuns Bengal with a 6-wkt win

Jammu & Kashmir contingent celebrates after a maiden Ranji Trophy final entry in Kalyani, West Bengal, on Wednesday. PTI

MOHSIN KAMAL

It will be hard to get an opportunity like that to make it to the Ranji semifinals again."

This writer told one of the Jammu & Kashmir players at the start of the current domestic season.

"Don't worry, *iss baar aur aage jayenge* (we will go even further this time)," came the reply.

Last season, J&K had fallen agonisingly short, just one run away from a place in the Ranji Trophy semifinals. The heartbreak was visible. But, so was the belief.

Now, that belief has turned into history. After 67 long years, J&K have reached the Ranji Trophy final for the first time. They defeated Madhya Pradesh in the quarterfinal and then outplayed a star-studded Bengal side in the semifinal, both away from home.

Not long ago, J&K were considered minnows in Indian domestic cricket. So what changed?

The turnaround

While commentating during J&K's match against Madhya Pradesh, former India cricketer Ashok Malhotra shared a telling anecdote. He recalled that when Delhi toured J&K in the past, players treated it like a picnic. "We knew the match would finish in two days," he said. "After that, it was Pahalgam and Gulmarg."

That perception no longer exists.

In recent years, J&K have beaten heavyweights such as Mumbai, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Bengal. The transformation began in 2013-14 when J&K stunned Mumbai in Mumbai and reached the Ranji quarterfinals for the first time. That victory planted belief.

Parvez Rasool's India call-up soon after, even though brief, reinforced the idea that players from the region could compete at the highest level.

Yet consistency remained elusive. Administrative instability and an inconsistent system often derailed progress.

A significant shift came in 2018 when the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) appointed former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan as coach and mentor. Irfan identified talent but believed the mindset needed reform.

Two structural changes proved crucial. First, he scrapped the unwritten regional quota system that informally ensured equal representation from Jammu and Kashmir provinces. Selection was made merit-based rather than region-based.

Second, he fast-tracked promising age-group players into the senior setup, breaking the rigid progression that previously delayed exposure at the top level.

The impact was immediate. In the 2019-20 Ranji Trophy, J&K registered six outright wins and reached the quarterfinals. The upward curve had begun.

What is different?

This current squad has grown together through the age-group system. The shared journey has fostered cohesion, something that had often been missing in the past.

This season, despite losing their opening match to Mumbai, J&K have marched into the final largely on the strength of their bowling. Auqib Nabi has led the charge with 55 wickets in nine matches, emerging as one of the standout bowlers of the tournament. He has been ably supported by left-arm pacer Sunil Kumar and the quick Yudhvir Singh.

J&K's pace attack has dismantled opposition batting line-ups consistently.

Equally significant has been the resilience of their lower order. While the top order has faltered at times, the middle and lower-order batters have delivered crucial contributions. J&K bat deep, even their No. 11 is capable of holding his own, allowing them to recover from precarious situations.

They will face Karnataka, who are waiting for formalities to be completed in the other semifinal against Uttarakhand, in the final, a formidable opponent with pedigree in the tournament.

Again an away game, the challenge will be stern. But given the brand of cricket J&K have played this season, particularly away from home, they will back themselves.

From being a team once treated as a tourist stop, J&K now stand one match away from rewriting their cricketing history.

Brief scores: Bengal: 328 all out & 99 all out It to Jammu & Kashmir: 302 & (O/n: 43/2): (Shubham Pundir 27, Vanshaj Sharma 43 n.o., Abdul Samad 30 n.o.; Akash Deep 3-46). PoM: Auqib Nabi.

(The writer is a Kashmir-based senior sports journalist)

Dream come true: Manhas

Back in 2021, when current BCCI president Mithun Manhas became one of the administrators of a crisis-ridden Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), he had to set things right in a body that was dealing with mismanagement and allegations of corruption, reports PTI from New Delhi.

On Wednesday, when the Jammu and Kashmir team created history by reaching its first ever Ranji Trophy final, Manhas could afford to be a bit emotional.

"It wasn't very easy at that time when I took over as the administrator. The then BCCI secretary Jay Shah gave me a free hand and told me that do whatever is needed to get Jammu and Kashmir cricket back on track," Manhas said after J&K's six-wicket win over two-time former champions Bengal in the Ranji semifinal in Kalyani.

"I was watching the match on TV and beating a side like Bengal that had players like Mohammed Shami and Akash Deep is a huge achievement. The cricketer in me is emotional as I ended my first-class career and also worked with the state unit there."

WHAT THEY SAID

Cricket tests you far more than it rewards you. We just have to be stubborn. We have to keep going. So, God has written that we will play in the final.

PARAS DOGRA
J&K captain

My mindset is that you put the ball in a channel, don't think too much about the results and what the batsman are doing or thinking. I have my own area, I stick to that. I don't think much about the rest.

AUQIB NABI
J&K pacer

In Sholay, everybody had a role - Thakur, Jai, Veeru, the Jailor, even Hariram Naai (barber). Nobody knew the film would become such a big hit, but every character played his part perfectly. Our team is like Sholay. There is no superstar. Everybody knows his role and plays it to perfection. That's why we are here.

AJAY SHARMA
J&K coach

Mathikere CC face National Cricketers in JBM shield final

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bowlers across four teams called the shots as Mathikere Cricket Club and National Cricketers progressed to the summit clash in the KSCA Group I - V Division league cum knockout tournament for the JB Mallaradhya Shield here.

After managing what appeared a modest 220/9 in 50 overs, Mathikere skittled Caravan Cricketers for a paltry 122 for a comprehensive 98-run win. While Rahul Shetty claimed 3/23, Manoj Bhandage (2/25), Chandru Aiyanna (2/32) and Nagaraj Hegde (2/8) picked up a couple of wickets each as they chipped in well in support.

In the other semifinal, National Cricketers made a heavy weather of a 68-run target by Young Cricketers (1). With Saleem Ali claiming 4/16, National Cricketers managed to reach the target in 17.2 overs and struggled on their way to do so as they lost four wickets.

Earlier, Sunil Kumar (4/15) and Prasanna Patilkulkarni (3/14) helped Nationals restrict Young Cricketers to 67 all out in 25.2 overs.

Brief scores (semifinals): At CMR University: Mathikere Cricket Club: 220/9 in 50 overs (Rohan R Shah 60, Nischal D 27, Rahul Menon 27 n.o.; KC Cariappa 2-19, Piyush V Gandhi 2-44, Advaith V Gowda 3-56) bt Caravan Cricketers: 122 all out in 34.3 overs (Darshan SS 55; Manoj Bhandage 2-25, Rahul Shetty 3-23, Chandru Aiyanna 2-32, Nagaraj Hegde 2-8).
At BGS: Young Cricketers (1): 67 all out in 25.2 overs (Sunil Kumar DH 4-15, Madhusudan R 2-26, Prasanna Patilkulkarni 3-14) lt to National Cricketers: 68/4 in 17.2 overs (Saleem Ali 4-16).

Advani beats Chawla for title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Ace cueist, Pankaj Advani, clinched the inaugural Liber Win Champions Cup, defeating Kamal Chawla 6–3 in a best-of-11 final here at the Karnataka State Billiards Association on Wednesday.

In the semifinal, facing former 6-Red world champion, Laxman Rawat, Advani found himself staring at defeat, trailing 4–1 in a best-of-9 encounter. With elimination looming, he mounted a spirited comeback, clawing his way back to 4–4 and forcing a dramatic decider.

In a tense final frame, Advani surged to a 60-point lead, but Rawat narrowed the deficit and set up a potential steal. After doing all the hard work to bring himself within touching distance, but Advani kept his cool to capitalise on a mistake and book his place in the final.

In the other semifinal, Kamal Chawla, recovered from a 4–1 deficit to win 5–4 against Sourav Kothari.

Pankaj Advani

Smaran hits hundred as Karnataka build 802-run lead

LUCKNOW, PTI

Ravichandran Smaran scored his second successive hundred as Karnataka continued to grind down Uttarakhand to reach 299 for six in their second innings for a whopping overall lead of 802 runs on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Wednesday.

Karnataka assured a berth in the title clash against Jammu and Kashmir, securing a 503-run first innings lead after bowling out Uttarakhand for 233 in their first innings in the opening session of the penultimate day.

However, that massive lead notwithstanding, Karnataka did not enforce the follow-on, and used the second innings to give further practice to their batters ahead of the final, starting from February 24.

Karnataka promoted lower-order batters like Kruthik Krishna and Shreyas Gopal to give them some game time and the former put that into good use with a 52.

But Smaran, once again, was at the forefront of Karnataka's charge with a 127 off 149 balls (12x4, 3x6), stitching together a stand of 168 runs with KL Rahul (70 batting, 67b) for the fifth wicket.

Karnataka's Smaran R (left) and Kruthik Krishna struck a century and half-century. PTI

Smaran and Rahul came together after Uttarakhand bowlers captured four wickets upfront to reduce Karnataka to 122 for four in their second innings, though the visitors lead, by then, had gone past the 600-run mark.

This was the 22-year-old Smaran's second hundred in the match after making a 135 in the first innings to power Karnataka to an imposing 736.

Earlier, Uttarakhand started the day at a wobbly 149 for five with Lakshya Raichandani and Saurabh Rawat starting the proceedings for them.

However, Karnataka got the first breakthrough of the day in the first over itself. Pacer Vyshak Vijayakumar ousted Rawat for 14, and Raichandani too soon was castled by the same bowler.

Uttarakhand too slipped to 175 for nine, but Aditya Rawat made an unbeaten 45 off 38 balls to take his side past 200.

For Karnataka, pacers Vyshak and Vidyadhar Patil took six wickets.

Brief scores: Karnataka: 736 and 299/6 in 63.5 overs (R Smaran 127, KL Rahul 70 n.o., Krurthik Krishna 52; Abhay Negi 2-53, Mayank Mishra 2-57) vs Uttarakhand: 233 all out in 88.5 overs (Lakshya Raichandani 55, Aditya Rawat 45 n.o.; Vyshak Vijayakumar 3-45, Vidyadhar Patil 3-40, Shreyas Gopal 2-41).

Stride FC close in on promotion

BENGALURU, DHNS: A brace from Ginneithang Gangte (14th and 90+5th minute) took Stride Sports FC closer to promotion as the table toppers earned a 3-1 victory over Sree Gajanana FC in the BDFA A Division League Championship at the BFS here on Wednesday.

With the top two earning promotion to the super division -- followed by a final (likely on February 25) to decide the champions -- Stride are now on 31 points and five ahead of third-placed rivals BTM FC with just two rounds left. A win in their next match will be enough to confirm their promotion.

Meanwhile, second-placed Technicio FF (29) earned three crucial points comfortably with a 4-0 drubbing of AGORC FC.

Results: A Division: Stride Sports FC: 3 (Ginneithang Gangte 14th, 90+5th, Imran Khan 45+2nd) bt Sree Gajanana FC: 1 (Jones Muthuraj 55th P); Technicio FF: 4 (Aaron Telaspher Rodriguez 15th P, 54th, Ronn Jairus Joel 16th, Akheel Razak 67th) bt AGORC FC: 0; Jawahar Union FC: 2 (Lalminlian 58th P, Manggoulal Kipgen 68th) bt Real Chikmagalur FC: 0; Roots FS: 3 (Thangkaihao Haokip 32nd, 34th, Sparsh Desai 90+7th) bt Blitz FC: 1 (Vishwa Krishnan P 54th).

Alcaraz survives a scare by Rinderknech; Rublev wins

DOHA, AFP: Carlos Alcaraz made a triumphant return to action following his Australian Open success as he beat Arthur Rinderknech 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) in the first round in Doha on Tuesday.

Alcaraz, who became the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam with his victory in Melbourne, saw off the 30th-ranked Rinderknech in two closely contested sets.

"It was really difficult. Arthur is a really dangerous player. Nobody wants to play against him in the first round," said Alcaraz. "I'm happy with the level. I'm happy that I got through difficult moments in the match. I'm happy that I stayed calm and positive, and played great tennis."

The world number one will face another Frenchman in round two, 60th-ranked Valentin Royer.

Alcaraz took the first set after breaking in the fifth game but faced dogged resistance from Rinderknech, who brought up his first break points of the match with the top seed serving to force a tie-break in the second set. The Spaniard saved both and then closed out victory in the tie-break, ripping a forehand down the line on match point.

Carlos Alcaraz. AFP

Alcaraz's chief rival Jannik Sinner is on the other side of the draw. No player other than Alcaraz or Sinner has won a tour-level title at an event featuring both of them since Andrey Rublev lifted the trophy in Madrid in May 2024.

Rublev booked his place in the second round with a straight-forward 6-4, 6-3 victory over Dutchman Jesper De Jong.

India's Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty returns during her straight-set win over Malta's Francesca Curmi at the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday. DH PHOTO/ BK JANARDHAN

Shrivalli strides ahead as Maaya, Vaidehee exit

Sahaja to face top seed Talia in the round of 16; three Indians stay in hunt

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

There was barely any emotion on display and only a composed walk towards the net to shake hands with her opponent. This was India's Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty's celebration after a hard-fought 7-6 (6), 6-4 opening round victory over Malta's Francesca Curmi at the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 here on Wednesday.

Ranked 543 in the world, the wild card entrant Shrivalli relied on home advantage and put faith in her serves to knock-out the world No. 336 Curmi in straight sets on a day when two of her fellow country women - Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi and Vaidehee Chaudhari - were shown the exit door at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium.

Playing last among the three Indians in fray on the second day of main draw action, the 24-year-old Shrivalli began on the backfoot when the 23-year-old Curmi took early control of the match to lead 4-2 in the opening set. Holding serve in the all important seventh game helped the home girl regain some confidence and momentum that eventually saw her break Curmi's serve in the eighth to level the proceedings at 4-4.

With little to differentiate between the two opponents, Shrivalli stepped on the gas in the tie-breaker to close out the first set in her favour. This perhaps pumped in more oxygen into the Hyderabad youngster who swung her racquet with much more ease and moved around the court freely. That comfort saw Shrivalli trouble Curmi for the rest of the contest before clinching the match to enter the round of 16 where she is set to face third-seeded world No. 124 Hanne Vandewinkel of Belgium.

"I guess, when it mattered the most I held my nerve better than her and made her hit one extra ball. That's what worked in the end," said Shrivalli after her win.

Earlier in the day, fifth seed Polina Iatcenko of Russia was tested midway by India's Maaya but a strong start and a stronger finish gave the world No. 160 a 6-1, 1-6, 6-0 victory over the 16-year-old local girl.

Later on, the lone Indian qualifier Vaidehee Chaudhari (ranked 475) stayed toe-to-toe with top seed Talia Gibson of Australia for eight games of the opening set. However, things went south for Vaidehee as Talia sprinted away to a 6-4, 6-0 win to advance where Sahaja Yamalapalli awaits on the other side of the court on Thursday.

Results: Singles (round of 32, prefix denotes seeding): Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty (Ind) bt Francesca Curmi (Mlt) 7-6(6), 6-4; 5-Polina Iatcenko bt Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi (Ind) 6-1, 1-6, 6-0; 1-Talia Gibson (Aus) bt Vaidehee Chaudhari (Ind) 6-4, 6-0; 2-Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Victoria Milovanova 6-1, 6-4; 3-Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) bt Ya-Hsuan Lee (Tpe) 6-1, 6-2; 7-Elena Pridankina bt Eri Shimizu (Jpn) 7-6(5), 6-4; Mei Yamaguchi (Jpn) bt Anastasia Kulikova (Fin) 3-6, 6-0, 6-1; Kristiana Sidorova bt Sohyun Park (Kor) 4-6, 6-2, 6-3; Arina Gabriela Vasilescu (Rou) bt Priska Madelyn Nugroho (Ina) 6-2, 6-3; Jasmijn Gimbrere (Ned) bt Misaki Matsuda (Jpn) 7-5, 7-5.

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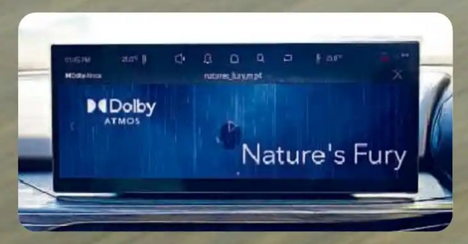

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